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THE CHURCH AT PRAYER

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FALSE GODS

THE ART OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

LESSONS ON THE WAY
(THREE VOLUMES)

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THE CHURCH AT PRAYER

AND THE WORLD OUTSIDE

BY

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PREFACE

THREE years ago a series of small conferences was begun between people of different religious opinions with a view to establishing a reconciliation upon the controversial subject of public worship. We succeeded in finding a very happy agreement; and I, for one, learnt much that I shall not forget from the opinions of others. Therefore when I was asked to write a book about the Church at Prayer, I felt that I might be able to attempt some kind of rough synthesis. The truth is, I believe, that the Christian religion is so large a thing that many types of service are needed to give it anything like adequate expression, and that there is really nothing to quarrel about. I have tried to stretch over the whole octave, and to give their due value to elements that are generally regarded as contradictory; the reader will therefore probably find statements that are unwelcome to him, but if he looks a little further he will be reassured, I hope, by finding that his own side of the truth has not been forgotten. The religion of Christ,

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if indeed it be the truth, must be too great for any one era, nation, or church to present in its fullness: how difficult then is the task of anyone who attempts to estimate the contributions that have been made, and to show that they are contradictory only where they are imperfect! The reader must be indulgent.

The task is indeed easier now than it used to be, because there is a very large body of Christians who are trying to be fair-minded and charitable. Christians used to say that they must love one another, but love had become so technical a term that it was often indistinguishable from hate. We are now finding, in this age of movements and conferences and of the comity of scholars, that it is best to begin over again by trying to *like* one another, and that as soon as we meet, we do like one another. We also find that the first step towards charity is to be quietly good-natured and fair. One unexpected result of this is that we become more critical, not only of our own position but of others', as we grow into sympathy with them and are therefore able to offer the only criticism that has any value. Nor was there ever a time when complacency was more perilous and sympathetic criticism more needed than at present.

For Christendom is leaving the Church. In some parts of the world the process is nearly

complete; few among our official bodies realise how rapidly the process is advancing in our own country: it is not easy for ministers of religion to see what is going on outside their own small circles, indeed it is common to hear clergy speak of the greatness, or even of the triumph, of their party, when all the time not five per cent. of their adult parishioners come near their own church. Some seventy years ago, Lord Palmerston said that he could not be called a pillar of the Church, but only a buttress, because he stood outside: to-day the average Briton has become a flying buttress. There has been a vast failure all over Christendom: for this there must be causes; profound mistakes must lie behind so huge a loss—evil things that need removal; and if we do not discover some of these evils, and criticise frankly, we shall be doing no service to any Church. Complacency is the chief enemy—that and disunion—and I have quite recently seen such complacency in a great church society as to fill me with something like terror. For unless we seize the chance of recovery that I believe still exists in this country, the end will come quietly and swiftly, and we shall find nothing left to build upon, but only the loss of a fellowship that it will take centuries to replace. Some may say that if the Churches stand between the people

and the Christ, it is better they should go. Yes, but the Churches do after all desire to serve the Christ: granted all the accusations against them, they can yet be true to their better selves, and thousands of self-sacrificing lives are spent in the attempt to follow the light where it can be found. Can we not yet bring the Churches nearer to the nation that has almost ceased to expect anything from them, so that we may all find out together what things there are which we ought to do?

So there is a third party to our argument, the Man Outside. I have tried not to forget that the reconciliation of the two main wings of British Christianity would be useless, and perhaps worse than useless, if we forgot the nation as a whole. Reunion between all the orthodox Churches in the world, great and wonderful as it would be, would still only be one step towards the goal that has to be reached; for powerful new religious movements have come into being, while we wrangle over those secondary matters which seem to us so important. Is there much hope while we regard the Church as a matter of traditional organisation, and evade the mind of Christ? The only solid hope that I can see is that in rapidly increasing numbers we may return to the religion of the Gospels, and give up all thoughts of rights or status, all attempts to

justify ourselves at the expense of others, or to exercise that domination which has so pitifully defeated its own ends. The man outside will help us here: he sees that all our controversies are a little mad. Indeed the clergy do tend to lose their sanity of outlook without the laity—and most of the laity are now outside.

What then would I have the Churches do—presumptuous as I am? I would have them—shall I say?—give up their self-consciousness, their trust in their organisations and machinery, their partisanship, and occupy themselves in the service of man and of God. The service of man is not the subject of this book, nor is that intellectual service of God which Jesus stressed so significantly when he added to the Shema' the words "and with all thy mind," but our subject is that service of prayer and praise which the Church has always offered to God. Perhaps half our difficulties would be gone if that divine service were what it might almost easily become. The world looks upon the Church as a body which provides services in certain buildings. That is indeed not all; but how much it is!

Though I have tried to consider the subject from many points of view, I am a member of the Church of England, and I would confess at the

outset that I think my own Church has in the present critical time opportunities that are unexampled. She has retained most of what is good in tradition and at the same time has emerged from the dream of uniformity and won her way to freedom and self-government; she has, I think, the fair-minded spirit of the English people (though the parties which have been her bane have often obscured it), and she holds as by birthright a mediating position. At the present moment, partisanship is threatening maybe her very existence; but she may survive it, and become the stronger for a danger overcome. Meanwhile she is trying, very patiently and with her traditional learning, to revise the Book of Common Prayer. I have said nothing about Prayer Book revision in the pages which follow, but I think some of them are pertinent to the subject. There is a danger on the one side of pedantically ecclesiastical changes which would reduce the Church of England to the shadow of her former self, dangers also from mere old-fashioned conservatism—less danger from too drastic change; but there is much reason to hope that the work will be well done, and the very fact that it is being undertaken by the Church herself is encouraging. More interest is taken in the principles of public worship to-day,

and more hope exists of their being generally understood. They have been much ignored in the past.

Indeed all the service-books of Christendom demand considerable improvement: they spring from a period of great intellectual poverty, and though they are far better than anything else in the scanty literature between Constantine and Otto the Great, they set us wondering why the concentration of the long Medieval period upon Church matters produced so little literature of the highest quality. They contain much that is noble and venerable, and our love of them makes it difficult for us to see their shortcomings; but we must not be surprised that they fail to satisfy nations whose mental emancipation began with Dante or Luther, or with the mighty pioneers of the French Renaissance or of Elizabethan England, or with the later founders of Russian literature. The modern world has stumbled in other departments of art, but in literature, as in philosophy and science, she has indeed moved forward; and, though the English-speaking peoples are peculiarly fortunate in having two great monuments of the Elizabethan era in the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, it would be strange indeed if no improvements could be made in the thought which was natural to

Englishmen between the reigns of Henry VIII and James I. Let us keep the old, loving it even with its faults; but let us endeavour also to produce something new, which shall still be faithful to the original principles of truth, intelligibility, simplicity, and beauty. Much excellent work has already been done in the National Assembly and by two or three societies; and perhaps I may venture to say that the revised services printed by the Oxford University Press, in what is known as the "Grey Book," do seem to me, especially in the admirable Liturgy, to approach the standard that we should desire.

Prayer Book revision, however, is but a small part of what needs to be done if the Church of Christ is to recover. Music, the static arts, and ceremonial are really more important—the subtle atmosphere and the aspect of worship, the manner of doing things, the tact and freedom which produce beauty. And behind those who are immediately interested in the Prayer Book stands a larger company, which includes the best intellects of the present age—the members of other Churches than my own and the men outside. I believe in the mission of the Church of England, but I know that it is only the shadow of that Church of the English people which does not yet exist: my hope lies in such a Church as that,

and in a larger Church of this whole Great Britain; and, beyond, in a larger Communion of the English-speaking world. Such a movement would make a far more heavy demand upon our moral qualities than the easier attempt of each party to combine with those Churches which most resemble it; but it would include the people as a whole, and, following the natural affinities of men, respecting their convictions, building upon their deep mutual understandings, it would have found the only way to a complete reunion of the whole Christian people, and would make possible such a free federation of all the nations in one Universal Church as did once exist, though imperfectly, upon the earth. To reach such a consummation, we have first of all to replace self-assertion by the common service of man, and controversy by a perfect worship of God, in spirit and in truth.

P. D.

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THE CHURCH AT PRAYER

CHAPTER I

THE TEACHING OF THE MASTER

We shall do well to begin by trying to discover what our Lord actually taught about prayer and how he prayed himself: this is not easy, because our teaching is conventional and his eternal; he is untouched, for instance, by the difficulties raised by our present knowledge of suggestion. The conventions about prayer grew up long ago from the traditions of theologians and preachers; they were men whose business it was to press the duty of prayer upon ordinary folk who did not pray very much: they were in consequence prone to urge their hearers to pray more, whatever kind of prayer might be the result. One consequence of this has been that an enormous part of Christian prayer has consisted in just those vain repetitions which Christ condemned. It is all so very natural. "Pray more," says the preacher. "We can't think of much to say," the people reply

(and with them, in truth, many preachers themselves, and many priests and monks). "We want to be religious, and of course religion means prayer; but it is very difficult, and little seems to come." So words are provided, and they are repeated with little thought of their meaning, till prayer degenerates into patter. It is only a second best, the apologists admit, but it is better than nothing.

Or, on the other part, people are urged, and rightly urged, to use their intelligence; and intercession, careful, detailed, scientific, has become a main pre-occupation in religious circles. It has undoubted results; and many are sure that here is scientific proof of the efficacy of prayer. But then comes the psychologist to tell us that all ideas tend to realise themselves, especially when they are the result of spontaneous attention, and still more when they are enveloped in a profound emotion. It is sufficient, they say, to think the end, and the subconscious mind finds the means, because there is a law in our being of subconscious teleology. Then once more the faith of the believer is shaken, and he asks, "Is intercession but a form of suggestion?" But the Christian answer should really be that this systematic intercession is not inculcated by Christ. It is a good thing, but it must stand on its own merits:

if we find that it is in the main the application of suggestion to ourselves and the conveyance of telepathic messages to others, it is none the worse for that, and none the less useful. Only we must not be disturbed if the theological element is less and the psychological more than we supposed: it is in any case a religious act to help others, and in intercession we at least try to do so with the help of God. If we used to think that by intercession we could persuade God to do things which without our persuasion he would not do, then we may be sure that we were unchristian as well as unreasonable. As it is, in systematic intercession we are trying an experiment of our own which must be justified by its results, and I think is so justified.

But it is very difficult for the preacher to enunciate such cold criticism as this; and it has always been difficult for him to enforce at all the very important negative teaching of Christ on the subject of prayer. Let us then begin with it here, in the hope that we may thus arrive at the untarnished truth which may have been hidden by the traditions of men.

Some of this negative teaching is well known, though it has been generally ignored or even defied; the rest is discovered for us by our more exact knowledge of the New Testament records.

Let us then first set down the six sources we possess for the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, noting them here in the probable order of their historical value. (1) *S. Mark*, the original from which most of the history in the first and third Gospels is taken. (2) *The Discourses*, which is a more comely designation than "Q" for the other document which lies imbedded in the first and third Gospels. (3) *S. Paul*, with some contributory passages in the Acts and other Epistles. (4) *S. Luke*, that is to say, passages peculiar to his Gospel. (5) "*Matthew*," passages peculiar to the compiler of the Gospel bearing this name. (6) "*John*," the author of the fourth Gospel. Of these the first three were probably written within about forty years of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, S. Mark and the Discourses being the most complete: these first two sources are also more free from accretion than the last three, and from defects due to the greater lapse of time. We need not suppose that the special contributions of the last three, especially those of S. Luke and John, were not derived from good sources, now lost: but in our present state of knowledge they have less support and less authority. And the alterations made by Matthew and S. Luke in the bulk of their work, when they are transcribing from S. Mark and the Discourses,

cannot as a rule represent more than their own opinions and their interpretations of the two original documents before them.

Jesus condemned all ostentation in prayer: it is the Pharisees who "for a pretence make long prayers": [1] indeed he seems to condemn publicity in prayer altogether; and, according to Matthew, he says definitely that men's prayer should be private.[2] If this means that all public worship is contrary to the mind of Christ, then the subject of this book is already ended. But I take it that worship is not meant, since Jesus himself attended the services of his Church, but something else, which is called *prayer*.

So we are brought to a definition of prayer. It is, may we say? not worship, nor intercession, but the personal communion of man with God. Jesus lays down no law about this—he never lays down laws—but he at least suggests that it is a thing to be achieved in private. Perhaps the small success of what are called devotions or devotional services in church, and their marked aberrations, are due to the fact that, though helpful to some people, they are not in accordance with the advice of Christ.

[1] Mark 12^{40}.

[2] This is found only in Matthew (Matt. 6^{5-6}), but there seems no other reason to doubt its authenticity.

Secondly, according to the same section in Matthew, he condemns vain repetitions and all methods which assume that men will be heard for their much speaking.[1] This seems to exclude such practices as the daily recitation of the Psalter, the rosary, those long litanies which are mainly the repetition of the names of saints or of epithets applied to S. Mary, much extemporary prayer, and all long and tedious services. It suggests that the words used in public worship should be few and well chosen.

Thirdly, by his attitude to Sabbath observance,[2] he would seem to condemn all servitude to ceremonial customs and rules, however ancient their tradition and however sacred their reputed origin. If this meant a condemnation of ceremonial as such, once again this little book would not have been written. The condemnation, however, is not of ceremonial worship—in which indeed Jesus took his part, showing a manifest love for the Temple and actively protesting against its desecration—but of ceremonial rules of conduct, enforced as if they had an ethical value. The principle of providing one day of rest in seven is an ethical principle: a man

[1] Also peculiar to Matthew, but not otherwise insecure (Matt. 6^7). It is supported by the "long prayers" in S. Mark.
[2] *E.g.* Mark 2^{27}.

is free to make his own rules in the matter, just as (to compare small things with greater) a man is free to make a personal rule of fasting Communion; but to say that it is wrong not to obey such rules is to fall into Pharisaism.

Further, our Lord refutes the very common idea that bulk of prayer is the important factor in religion, that the more a man prays the better he will be. His chief enemies, those furthest from him in principle, were men who prayed a great deal and devoted their lives to religious observances. According to Jesus, the value of prayer seems to depend, not upon its quantity but upon the spirit in which it is offered. Prayer requires, the earliest documents tell us, a dependence upon the fatherhood of God and charity with one another: "When ye pray, say, Father"; [1] and, "Whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against anyone." [2] This explains what is often a mystery to simple folk, and a difficulty about which the world is scornful enough—the unpleasant character of so many religious people: a man may pray seven times a day and may spend many hours upon his knees, but if he prays to the wrong god, or if he

[1] The Discourses (Luke 11^2, *cf.* Matt. 6^9).

[2] S. Mark 11^{25}.

prays with a bitter heart, his prayer will not make him more religious.[1] In this connection, the teaching about prayer in Christ's name which is given us in the Fourth Gospel enunciates the true principle of Christian prayer—that prayer to be acceptable must be framed in the spirit of Christ.[2]

On the negative side, if we may call it so, we have then this insistence upon the quality, as against the quantity, of prayer. The whole subject of worship, indeed, takes up a singularly small space in the Gospels; and this is the more remarkable when we come to observe that the more primitive the source, the less there is about prayer. In S. Mark the subject is mentioned but a few times; and it is only in the Fourth Gospel that a long section is put by the author into the form of a prayer. Very striking is the contrast between our ideas of what the life of a great religious teacher would be like, or between the lives of famous saints immersed in devotional observances, and the picture of the Son of Man, especially in S. Mark, making friends with all manner of people, healing them, helping them, and speaking to them—not in sermons—but in talks full of epigram, humour, and poetry. He

[1] I have tried to work this out at greater length in a little book called *False Gods*, Mowbrays. [2] John $14^{13, 14}$, 15^{16}, 16^{23-26}.

lays no stress on the observances and devotions in which religious men are prone to busy themselves. "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?" he was asked.[1] Only we feel, and once or twice are told, that behind all his activities is a life of quiet communion with his Father.

But he was reticent on the subject, and he seems to have said little or nothing about prayer, even to his intimate friends, until they asked him. Their question, "Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples,"[2] brings this reticence clearly before us, as the answer shows that he did indeed, as Matthew tells us, desire not "much speaking" but a right attitude to God and man.

This reticence, which contrasts so strongly with the constant exhortations to prayer in our pulpits and religious literature, seems to have been noticed by the later evangelists themselves, for they add a little more about prayer to the scanty references in S. Mark and the Discourses. S. Luke, for instance, amplifies the statement of S. Mark that "Jesus could no more openly enter into a

[1] S. Mark 2^{18}.

[2] S. Luke 11^{1}. This introduction to the Lord's Prayer seems to be from the Discourses, being omitted by Matthew because there is no place for it in the context (Matt. 6^{8}), where he inserts the Lord's Prayer.

city, but was without in desert places "[1]—a plain statement of the inconvenience caused by the garrulity of the leper—into, "But he withdrew himself into the deserts, and prayed."[2] No doubt he did pray; only S. Luke's original document does not say so. In the same way S. Luke adds to the Marcan account of the Baptism the statement that Jesus was praying,[3] and to that of the Transfiguration the words "as he was praying"; [4] and Matthew adds "and pray" to S. Mark's description of the little children who were brought that Jesus should touch them.[5] Again, S. Luke expands S. Mark's simple statement, "And he goeth up into the mountain"[6] into "he went up into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God."[7]

The more pronounced statements about prayer all belong to the later versions of the Gospel story. Such are the twin parables of the Friend at Midnight and the Unrighteous Judge; they are found in S. Luke alone, and in any case the exordium to the second, "that they ought always

[1] Mark 1^{45}. [2] Luke 5^{16}. [3] Luke 3^{21}.
[4] Luke 9^{29}. [5] Matt. 19^{13}. [6] Mark 3^{13}.
[7] Luke 6^{12}. S. Luke, while he omits the two occasions of retirement and prayer in Mark 1^{35} and 6^{46}, adds the mention of prayer eight times altogether, the other occasions being in Luke 5^{16}, 6^{12}, 9^{18}, 11^{1}, and, on the Cross, 23^{34} and 23^{46}.

to pray and not to faint" is an addition giving only the writer's own opinion.[1] The most striking remark in the Gospels on the subject—"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven"[2]—belongs to that "ecclesiastical" section of Matthew which reflects a later stage in Christian history, and is now recognised by scholars as an addition. The same applies to the still later instances in John, such as—"I pray for them: I pray not for the world . . . that they may be one, as we are,"[3] and the verses that follow. However convinced we may feel that the writer had access to sources which revealed the very mind of Christ, no scholar to-day thinks that the form in which the thoughts are expressed by "John" is other than the writer's own.

There is one other statement, an addition by S. Luke to the Marcan narrative, which requires separate mention. Did our Lord exhort to intercession? We do not know. Did he practise it himself? We feel sure that he did; but, curiously enough, the only mention of the subject in the Synoptic Gospels seems to be half-ironical:—"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have

[1] Luke 11^{5}, 18^{1}. [2] Matt. 18^{19}.
[3] John 17^{9-11}, and the rest of the chapter.

you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not: and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren."[1] Whatever ground S. Luke may have had for adding this to S. Mark's narrative, he picks up the narrative again in the next verse but one, with the prediction that Simon Peter's faith *will* fail—"I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." The intercession is proclaimed to be unsuccessful.

Let us now turn to the more positive side of our subject and enquire what we can learn from S. Mark and the Discourses about the best authenticated elements in our Lord's teaching and practice. It will be simplest perhaps to divide these into three classes: 1. What Jesus said to others about prayer; 2. What we are told about his own practice; 3. His use of suggestion.

1. The Teaching of Jesus

To point out much which seems so negative as to be almost a discouragement to prayer may not be a welcome proceeding in the professional circles of religion, because religious ministers are

[1] Luke 22^{31-32}.

accustomed to urge the obligation of prayer upon a world which cares too little about it. But it is our duty to seek truth in the first place, and it may be that this will have a more lasting effect upon the world and produce in the end a truer godliness than our traditional exaggerations. I think all those who have had considerable experience with individuals will agree that there is a good deal of unconscious insincerity in the matter: people will stand up in religious gatherings and give the impression that they spend hours a day in prayer, when their real thought is that they imagine all other religious people do, and therefore take it for granted as a pious postulate.[1] God does not seem to have given the power of much prayer to many even among the best people; and, so far as we can judge, his will for men in general, since he has so made our human nature, is that they should live as his loving and trustful children, drawing upon him for their spiritual health, and praying above all, but without making long prayers, that his will may be done. To a few there are given special gifts, just as to a few it is given to be poets or artists or mathematicians, but only harm is done if people imagine that they must try to force gifts which they do not possess.

[1] See p. 43.

Such at least seems to be the conclusion to which our fuller knowledge of the Gospels would lead us. Our Lord was reticent where we are profuse, because he knew the ways of God and understood the hearts of men. We have in our more recent psychology special terms for those facts of human nature which he knew by his divine intuition. Pharisaism indeed needs no new name: he told us about that danger in religious exercises; but had he not also in his mind the danger of reaction among ordinary people when such exercises are exaggerated to them? And did he not also understand that principle which is now called the "law of reversed effort"? We need, recent psychologists tell us, concentrated attention, but it must be spontaneous, and if it is forced, the effort counteracts itself; if by conscious effort we try to change our subconscious nature or a suggestion which is within us, the effort is not only ineffectual but actually defeats the desired end—as, after all, everyone knows who has tried to force himself to go to sleep. Did not our Lord also understand the "law of auxiliary emotion," and know therefore that people will pray aright, not when they are told that it is wicked not to pray, or even (as they often are told) that it is wrong not to make long prayers, but when the idea of prayer is enveloped

in a powerful emotion? With him the emotion of love, or gratitude, or faith, or forgiveness always comes first. He seems to leave prayer to take care of itself: it comes when it is natural for it to come.

In the original documents (if we may call them so), S. Mark and the Discourses, there are six passages in which our Lord speaks to others about prayer.[1] All, I think, are in accordance with these principles. (1) Jesus takes it for granted that his hearers pray, and assures them that faith will bring success. "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." He goes on to insist upon the spirit of forgiveness—"And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against anyone." [2] (2) Forgiveness and love are insisted upon also in the Discourses: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." [3] (3) Prayer is included with the duty of watchfulness—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." [4] (4) Jesus tells the disciples to pray "the Lord of

[1] Omitting the instance ("pray ye that it be not in the winter," Mark 13^{18}) in the Little Apocalypse, which is an insertion, different in style and vocabulary from the rest of the Gospel.

[2] Mark 11^{24-5}. [3] Luke 6^{27-8}, Matt. 5^{44}. [4] Mark 14^{38}.

the harvest that he send forth labourers into the harvest." [1] (5) Jesus says that a specially difficult kind of healing can be accomplished only by prayer —" This kind can come out by nothing save by prayer." [2]

In all these there is a remarkable absence of pressure or insistence. In the most important instance, (5) The Lord's Prayer, from the Discourses,[3] the advice seems to have been given, as S. Luke says, in answer to a request from one of the disciples; though Matthew combines it with the section peculiar to him about " much speaking " and " your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." It is thought that the Lucan version, without the phrases in the margin of the Revised Version, gives the original prayer, because if S. Luke had known the longer version he would have used it: I should like to think that the Matthean version was also taught as it stands by Jesus; indeed I do think so, on the ground that so incomparable a thing cannot have been made by accretion; but for our immediate argument, the shortness of the Lucan version is specially significant as an answer to the request, " Teach us to pray." Instead of

[1] Apparently from the Discourses (Luke 10^{2}, Matt. 9^{38}).

[2] Mark 9^{29}. " And fasting " does not occur in the best MSS.

[3] Luke 11^{2-4}, Matt. 6^{9-13}.

a long instruction, and methods, and long forms (what abundance of these the Church has since provided!), we find—"Father, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come. Give us day by day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us; and bring us not into temptation." All the thought here is on the spirit in which we are to pray—co-operation with the will of God as our Father, the request for our common needs, material and spiritual, and the principle of forgiveness, so strongly insisted upon.

There is one important passage in the Discourses (6), that which begins "Ask and it shall be given you," which seems to describe the general life of spiritual activity and the divine response to human pressure rather than prayer in the sense of petition or intercession; or rather, it describes prayer as a continual exploration of the divine Spirit, a pressing into the truth and love which are God. The scientist and the artist as well as the saint seem to find their justification and their place in this passage. We shall feel this more if we take it in such a version as Dr. Moffatt's, where the exact meaning of the original is more closely followed than in the Revised Version; and also, if, following the practice I have adopted, we prefer the account of S. Luke as being generally

closer to the Discourses than Matthew : [1]—" Ask and the gift will be yours, seek and you will find, knock and the door will open to you ; for everyone who asks receives, the seeker finds, the door is opened to anyone who knocks. What father among you, if asked by his son for a loaf, will hand him a stone ? Or, if asked for a fish, will hand him a serpent instead of a fish ? Or, if asked for an egg, will he hand him a scorpion ? Well, if for all your evil you know to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father give the holy Spirit from heaven to those who ask him ? "

May we not conclude that our Lord's own prayer was of this nature, a loving exploration of his Father's mind, a communion with God of perfect receptiveness, discovery, intimacy ?

We have now to look for a moment at that which we can but dimly imagine. There are but few allusions to the prayer of Jesus ; but we may assume, as his followers have always assumed, that they represent a constant practice, and that the hidden life of Jesus, which was a life of entire unity with God, was frequently reinforced by retirement into solitary communion with his Father.

[1] Luke 11^{9-13}, Matt. 7^{7-11}. Matthew differs by omitting the culminating humorous illustration of the scorpion, and by ending with " give good things to them that ask him."

2. The Practice of Jesus

We know but little for certain about our Lord's own practice. The Discourses, so far as we can tell, are silent, and S. Mark mentions the prayer of Jesus but five times. Twice he tells us that Jesus looked up to heaven, once when he fed the five thousand people, "and looking up to heaven, he blessed and brake the loaves";[1] once, when he healed the deaf man, "and looking up to heaven he sighed, and saith unto him Ephphatha."[2] Twice he mentions the retirement of Jesus alone to pray: once, after healing many people "a great while before it was day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed";[3] and once, after that feeding of the five thousand, he took leave of the people, and "departed into the mountain to pray."[4] It is not, I think, fanciful to connect these two instances with the importance which psychologists attach to the practice of relaxation and collectedness. On both occasions Jesus had spent much power, and he retired to refresh himself by communion with God. The fifth occasion is the Agony in the Garden;[5] and here the solitary communion of Jesus with his Father is not only mentioned

[1] Mark 6^{41}. [2] Mark 7^{34}. [3] Mark 1^{35}.
[4] Mark 6^{46}. [5] Mark 14^{32-41}.

but is described in a few poignant sentences. We are told of a definite petition at this solemn moment; but we feel as we read that Jesus knew the petition could not be granted, that the cup would not be removed: the human cry for release is bound up with trust in God, and the prayer ends as one of co-operation with the Father's will.

What we can gather from these accounts is that prayer with Jesus was reflective and receptive, a drinking in, if we may so express it, of the divine power and wisdom, and a co-operation with the divine will. The problems which afflict people about answer to prayer do not emerge at all. Prayer is conceived as communion with God, in which the prayer and the answer are simultaneous; or as an act of co-operation with God, as in the Lord's Prayer—a putting of ourselves on God's side and joining our forces to his, for the furtherance of his good purpose to mankind.

3. Suggestion

The term Suggestion is modern, and we are therefore apt to think of the thing itself as modern and as "secular," or even as somewhat illicit. People suspect that in their prayers and intercessions they are really using suggestion and self-

suggestion, and perhaps imparting their suggestions telepathically to those on whose behalf they pray. It is indeed probably true that much of the efficacy of prayer is due to suggestion, and that when we pray for those at a distance we are practising telepathy; but that does not alter the religious character of what we do, nor does it remove the divine element, since the religious character of what we do depends upon the love in it, and God is as much in suggestion as he is in every other human activity, because in him we live and move and have our being. The truth is that prayer is good when it is offered in the right spirit (in faith, love, and forgiveness) to the true God, and wrong when offered in pride and sourness to an idol, that is to a false conception of God;[1] and suggestion in the same way may be right or wrong. We are always forgetting that prayer is not good in itself but is only good when it is in relation to God, and that idolatrous or Pharisaical prayer is an evil thing bringing evil in its train, and that this is the reason why many men who pray little, or not at all in any formal sense, are better and more religious than many

[1] I am afraid I must again refer to books of my own, to *False Gods* (Mowbrays), where I have tried to work out this principle, and to *Body and Soul* (Pitmans), where I have dealt with the questions of suggestion and telepathy with special regard to the healing works of Christ.

who spend much time on their knees. In the same way, suggestion, like any other human activity, is a power which comes from God and is meant to be used rightly and in a religious spirit, but which may be diverted into wrong uses.

If then a company of people gather to make intercession, say, for some missionaries far away in India, their success may be due to suggestion and telepathy, but their action is none the less a right and religious one, none the less an act of co-operation with God. Indeed it is a specially Christian act, because it consists not in the much speaking of " long prayers " but in a strong effort of love. On the other hand, a formal Litany of Missions may be recited by a perfunctory clergyman before an ungodly reredos, in the presence of a scattered and listless congregation, in which there is no element of suggestion or of anything else which has spiritual power. Müller's remarkable success in financing his orphanage, by praying for money as he wanted it, used to be one of the classical instances of " answer to prayer." The psychic discoveries of the last thirty years now cause many to believe that he really got his money by telepathy. But he prayed for a good object; and the telepathy consisted in passing his good desires through a divine channel in order that he

might do God's work. I do not think that a book-maker would have produced the same financial results.

Prayer is not the bending of God's will to ours —such prayer indeed can never have an answer— it is not the attempt to compel God to alter his plans, or make exceptions in our favour, or remember something which he had forgotten. It is the opening of our spirits to God, and the use of his power to accomplish his will.

Our Lord's whole ministry shows that he knew (1) that part of the divine will is that men should be free from sickness, and (2) that part of the divine power is employed through suggestion and telepathy. All that recent psychologists have discovered about mental processes in healing, his methods and his words show that he understood. He healed, in the power of God and in his own divine love, by implanting in the subconscious the idea of health, by encouraging the will to health, by strengthening in word and look and dramatic action the will through a strong emotion—in a word by suggestion, and, when the patient was at a distance, by telepathy as well; and by referring his success to the patient's faith he showed that he knew he was using suggestion. These things do not need an array of texts: they are the very stuff of the Gospels.

After all, the very act of prayer to an immaterial Being is itself an act of telepathy, and the gifts that we chiefly ask in prayer, the gifts which we are sure we can rightly ask, are those divine suggestions in our hearts which we call the grace of the Holy Spirit.[1] Mighty prayer indeed is always specially reinforced by suggestion; it is the combination of desire and faith with dependence upon the power of God which can and does remove mountains.

Our Lord then freely used suggestion; we have little or no evidence that he isolated intercession from suggestion, or indeed that he urged intercession, either individual or united, upon his disciples. Both by word and example, he taught them to live near to God, to be receptive to the divine grace; he taught them also to co-operate with the good will of God; and he taught them to live in charity and to forgive, and to do good with all their power—whether by physical act or by spiritual suggestion. His teaching was far more original than we have imagined.

If the points which I have here suggested be true, two important conclusions follow.

1. Jesus knew that men vary in their capacity for prayer, and that many good men have the capacity but little, while others who, like the

[1] P. 218.

Pharisees, are not good, have the capacity at least for protracted devotional exercises. He therefore did not urge devotional exercises even upon his chosen disciples; nor did he, so far as we know, exhort them to prayer. In this he seems to have differed from all his subsequent followers: they have taught that it is wrong not to pray regularly and often; he, on the contrary, taught that it is wrong not to love God and man. His position about prayer can, I think, only be understood if we assume that he regarded it as a privilege—or rather as a gift, which some men possess, as some possess special gifts of character, understanding, or function—a gift to be cultivated but not to be forced. He did not preach it as a religious duty, but took it for granted as he found it, and urged that it should be purified by simplicity and love. What he taught and sought in people—and found in the most unlikely people—was goodness.

Many of us found out something about the truth of this during the War, when we were often living at close quarters with people and got to know them more intimately than before. We found that many good men, zealous for religion and devoted to Christ, spent very brief moments in prayer; yet we found that God was everything to them, and that in their lives there was a

connection with him that seemed seldom to be broken. Probing a little further, we found that in specially religious circles many people prayed very little, but imagined that this was a special vice of their own and that everyone else prayed a great deal. I remember in particular one devotional gathering in which a speaker assumed that all his audience spent two hours a day in prayer. One of these, in some distress at his own shortcomings, asked the speaker privately after the meeting how he managed to pray so much. The speaker replied quite simply that he himself did not spend more than a few minutes in prayer, but that he knew he was an unfortunate exception, and had therefore spoken from the point of view of the others. Further inquiry showed that the others were in a similar position.

The truth seems to be that the Creator has made men as they are, and that men cannot alter their capacities, though they can improve them and can purify them from evil. We are meant all to live in the love of God, to withstand the evil that is a disease of our nature, making the best use of whatever faculties we possess. It would seem that the Creator does not desire ordinary men to spend hours in prostration before him, since he has not given ordinary men that faculty, but rather would have them live in fellowship with

him, rejoicing in his sight, seeing his hand in everything, and crowning their lives with moments of worship.

If this be so, it at least accords, I would venture to suggest, with what we know of the teaching of Christ, who found in ordinary men the readiest response.

2. The second conclusion which follows is that all our difficulties and problems about prayer disappear. They do not arise in connection with the authentic teaching of Jesus at all, but are due to ideas which have been added.

One difficulty, the most recent, I have already mentioned. But, besides the problem of suggestion, all those problems also disappear which arise in connection with prayer and the reign of law, and with the obvious and agonising fact that prayer is often unanswered.

For prayer is co-operation with God. It is not the endeavour to make God alter his mind, or suspend his laws; it is not the endeavour to remind him of things which he would otherwise forget, or to persuade him to do things for our own benefit, which he would otherwise fail to do. To primitive man, worshipping an irascible and vacillating idol, made in his image, it was natural to think of prayer in such ways—as self-abasement, promise of sacrifice, pleading, or even as flattery

and bargaining—and perhaps primitive phraseology will never quite disappear from the prayers of men ; but it is time that the Christian Church at least pressed more consistently the teaching of Christ and the scientific philosophy which shows that teaching to be true. In all religions, the higher the view of God, the more does prayer lose the element of entreaty and become a disinterested homage of praise and thanksgiving, culminating in mystic communion.

" For after all these things do the Gentiles seek ; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you."[1]

God is always there, knowing all things, always doing the best that can be done for his children. We cannot by prayer make him do more than he would otherwise do. But we can by prayer open ourselves to him ; for God is always there, like the sun, and man is like the plant which spreads out its leaves and opens itself to the heat and light rays of the sun—but with this difference, that man has the power to withdraw himself from the light

[1] The Discourses (Matt. 6^{32}, Luke 12^{30}). Repeated by Matthew (6^{8}), in the passage about vain repetitions : " For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

of God, because man has a measure of free-will. Man can experience God or not. The act of experiencing God is prayer.

This is Receptive Prayer. We do not thereby alter the purpose of God, but we receive the grace of God which is his main purpose for us.

The other kind of prayer is Co-operative Prayer. God, being love, has put off his omnipotence: we can refuse him and thwart him: we can also, by accepting his purpose, as we are bidden in the Lord's Prayer, help him to establish his Kingdom. In such prayer we make ourselves better agents for carrying out God's will; we help others to become better agents; and—dare we not say it?—we become fellow-workers with God by adding some power of our own to the Power that makes for good.

Possibly this second kind of prayer is inferior to action. Certainly right action is to be classed with it as a form of co-operation with God. *Laborare est orare.*

Here then we meet and solve another difficulty —that of the men who manage to be noble and good without "praying." For we can see that both Reception and Co-operation can exist apart from devotional exercises, as in many good men they do so exist. This would seem to be the

reason why Jesus asked for love and said little about prayer, being content to judge men by their fruits. For by Reception and Co-operation goodness comes into the world, and the work of Jesus was to increase that goodness and to establish the reign of God.

Reception, the prayer which is Experience, and Co-operation, the prayer which is Dedication, are necessary for a right human life. All men have some capacity for them, but they are not necessarily dependent on forms or times and seasons; they can be "without ceasing," for they are the whole attitude of a life. Only a few men have special gifts of meditation, insight, vision: to insist on the exercise of the capacities of mysticism when they do not exist is like making a child who has no ear for music spend hours every day at the piano. Jesus never insisted on devotional exercises, and perhaps this was why he succeeded so completely with ordinary people. He loved them, and understood them—wholesome, industrious, full of kindliness, they are the stuff out of which the Kingdom of Heaven has to be made. Of what heroism are they capable! To what great developments can humanity be brought!

Jesus understood this. He neither despised the ordinary man as the Pharisees did, nor made unnatural demands on him as preachers have always

been prone to do ; but he took him on his highest side—his capacity to love.

The problem of the Christian Church has been, and is, to carry on the work of Jesus. She has succeeded in a measure, and in a measure she has failed.

CHAPTER II

PUBLIC WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS

During the history of Christendom the Church has achieved conspicuous success and has done much for the uplifting of mankind through two forms of religious activity—public worship and the administration of sacraments. In both these she has for warrant the example of her Founder.

1. Public Worship

1. Jesus attended the synagogues in order to preach in them, during the early part of his ministry, so long indeed as the authorities allowed this to be possible.[1] The local synagogue may be compared to the parish church of to-day, and its system of worship to our ordinary Morning or Evening Service. Every Jewish town and village had a synagogue, a rectangular building often divided by columns into three or five aisles: at the end was the ark containing the sacred writings,

[1] S. Mark gives an example of this in Mark 6^{2}.

ornamented with a canopy above and screened by a curtain in front: the "chief seats" were in front of the platform on which the ark rested, and faced those of the people: there were lamps and candelabra. The service in our Lord's time consisted of (1) The *Shema'*,[1] preceded and followed by benedictions, (2) Prayers, probably not set forms at that time, (3) Lessons from (*a*) "The Law," *i.e.* the Pentateuch, and (*b*) The Prophets, which formed the most important part of the service. Here the service originally ended; but as Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language, there was added (4) A translation or paraphrase of the readings into the vernacular, and (5) An exposition, which was not a sermon, being didactic rather than rhetorical and delivered in the sitting posture by any competent person present or by a visitor.

2. Far above these simple local services in the mind of a Jew were the elaborate and gorgeous functions centralised at the Temple in Jerusalem. Besides the special ceremonies at various seasons, of which the Passover[2] is the most familiar to Christian readers, we know that Jesus frequented the Temple and taught in it;[3] and we may feel

[1] "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one, etc.," Deut. 6^{4-9}, 11^{13-21}, Num. 15^{37-41}; *cf.* Mark 12^{29}.

[2] *E.g.* Mark 14^{12}. [3] *E.g.* Mark 14^{49}.

sure also that he was familiar with the ordinary morning and evening sacrifices which were always attended by crowds of worshippers, who watched while the high priest entered the Holy Place to present the incense offering, received his benediction when he came out, listened to the chanting of the Levites, and prostrated themselves when the priests sounded their silver trumpets from before the walls of white marble plated with gold. Our Lord, as it would seem, intended the so-called "cleansing of the Temple"[1] as a formal abrogation of animal sacrifices as well as a reminder that the Temple was "a house of prayer";[2] and the whole New Testament reflects his disapproval of propitiatory slaughter; but otherwise there is nothing in his words or acts to suggest that he had any fault to find with the public worship and the ceremonial that he knew so well. He esteemed that worship indeed in its proper place, approving the saying of the scribe that love is more than all holocausts and sacrifices;[3] but his whole conduct suggests that he loved the Temple and approved of the manner in

[1] Mark 11^{15}. The Outer Court where the act took place was not sacred; there was therefore no question of profanation, and the sheep and oxen, the doves and money-changers were indispensable so long as there were animal sacrifices at all.

[2] Mark 11^{17}.

[3] Mark 12^{34}.

which praise was offered to God in the great house of prayer.[1]

An interesting summary of the statements, not only in S. Mark and the Discourses, but in all the Gospels, has been given by Principal George Adam Smith: "The loyalty of Jesus to ritual was on some sides unexceptionable. The only faults of ceremonial with which his vigilant enemies charged him were his use of the Sabbath, his neglect of feasts, and his neglect of the washing of hands. He sent the leper whom he healed to the priest to fulfil the rights required of the Law. He bade his disciples offer their gifts at the altar after they were reconciled to their brethren. In defence of his conduct he appealed to the authority of the Temple and the example of the priests: the sanctity of the Temple, he said, was greater than that of the gold, the sanctity of the altar than that of the gifts laid upon it. He paid the half-shekel which was the Temple tax; he attended the statutory Temple feasts." To this might be added the story of the alabaster box of ointment, the organisation of the procession on Palm Sunday, the washing of the Disciples' feet, and his general use of symbolic speech and action.

[1] If we keep S. Mark alone, there are just enough references to support the fuller statements of the other Evangelists: *e.g.* Mark 1^{44}, 2^{26}, 7^{11}, 11^{16}, 14^{12}, 14^{26}.

We may then be assured that Jesus approved of public worship, both in its simpler and in its more ceremonial forms. He condemned formalism and the slavery to ecclesiastical observances; but he did not confuse formalism with honest ceremonial—as so many have done. He was no iconoclast, non-conformist, or æsthetic puritan.

2. Sacraments

Jesus also approved of two special religious acts in particular, which after the second century came to acquire the name of Sacraments [1]—Baptism, and a sacred meal which at first was called the Breaking of the Bread.

His approval of these acts is shown by his accepting baptism at the hands of S. John and by his presiding at the Last Supper.[2] Whether he instituted them as Christian rites has been disputed by modern scholars; but for our immediate purpose we are only concerned with the undoubted fact that he took part in such acts. He thereby justified dramatic action as a

[1] Tertullian calls Baptism and the Eucharist sacraments, but he also calls other things, *e.g.* the Resurrection, faith, the sign of the cross, by that name. S. Augustine also uses the word with some vagueness, including *e.g.* the exorcism of catechumens. S. Bernard includes the ceremony of the feet-washing. In the middle of the twelfth century Peter Lombard fixed the number of the sacraments at seven, and this became the dogma of the Medieval Church.

[2] *E.g.* Mark, chapters 1 and 14.

form of prayer—the performance for religious purposes of a symbolical act.

Such an act in the case of the baptism of Jesus was a means of bringing inward and spiritual grace,[1] and was therefore sacramental. The dispute in modern times as to what acts ought to be called sacraments is really beside the mark, and is due to our inadequate realisation of the sacramental nature of all material things: to the religious man all things and all actions are in their measure of right or wrong sacramental, being the expression of the world of spirit, and every act, rightly done, is sacramental and grace-conveying. But certain acts are done under special sanctions with a special religious purpose, and to these there gradually came to be given the name of sacraments. In the Middle Ages, when the number seven was still held in great honour, the Church declared that there were seven sacraments, minor ceremonies being called "sacramentals." We need not quarrel about words: the classification is convenient; and it is a fact that besides the two acts in which our Lord took part, Baptism and the Last Supper, there have been and are five rites in Christendom of lesser though still great importance, Confirmation, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick, Order, and Matrimony, though there

[1] Mark 1[10].

has been change in the manner of administering some of them, and there is much difference of opinion among Christians as to their meaning and efficacy. Nor need any deny the convenient term, "sacramentals," to minor religious ceremonies.

Christian worship then includes dramatic action —action that is significant and sacramental, and for such action in principle we have the warrant of our Lord's example. It is not probable that we possess a record of his instituting the sacrament of Baptism, for the concluding chapters of Matthew contain apocryphal elements, and the command to baptise in the Trinitarian formula bears every mark of a later interpolation ;[1] but Baptism could hardly have become the practice of his disciples had they not known that they were carrying out his desire.

In the same way, the fact that the disciples met together for the Breaking of Bread in some special religious sense shows at least that they universally believed they were fulfilling the mind of their Master. It is urged by modern scholars of great authority that the Last Supper was not the institution of a rite but only a farewell meal— the last of many solemn meals when the Master had blessed and broken as the little company gave thanks and prayed together. If this be so,

[1] Matt. 28^{19}.

the foundations of the Eucharist are rather deepened than otherwise, for Jesus then acted (as was indeed his wont) not as a legislator but by the irresistible beauty of his example. Many a time, no doubt, they had supped together after a day's work, and had given thanks for the day's success; and now at the last of those gatherings, sacramental indeed in the highest sense, they meet under the shadow of impending doom, and he says to them words like these: "I wanted to eat the Passover with you, but that is not to be. We will therefore make this our Passover: I myself will be your Paschal Lamb, and this bread and wine are my body and blood, broken and given for you. The first Passover was a covenant with God; this shall be our new covenant with him to-night." Such seems to have been the purport of his words —words that are becoming simple again to us in the light of recent scholarship, and natural because we are beginning to realise the poetry that was in Jesus, exalting and intensifying all he said.

The actual words are uncertain: they vary in the four accounts of S. Mark, S. Paul, Matthew, and S. Luke, while the Fourth Gospel omits the subject altogether and tells us instead about the washing of the Disciples' feet. At least this shows that the later literalisms were not in the spirit of those who gave us the original records as

descriptions and not as formularies. Did our Lord add, as S. Paul thought, "This do in remembrance of me?"[1] We cannot be certain; or at least, if we are certain for ourselves, we cannot impart our certitude to all those who have studied the question; but we can, I think, be certain that the Disciples would never have forgotten to remember their Lord when they ate the bread together and drank the wine, whether he had told them or not. The Last Supper could not have failed to be indeed an institution, because the disciples could not have eaten together afterwards without its burning in their memory.

Another instance should be added which is often forgotten. The Twelve were sent out by Jesus on a mission which included psychotherapy: doubtless at his suggestion, and certainly with his approval, they anointed the sick,[2] and this outward sign was successful in producing the psycho-physical result. Its use was carried on afterwards, as we learn from S. James[3] and from many writers of the succeeding centuries.

We might go further, and say that all the Seven Sacraments of the Medieval Church belong to the imitation of Christ and have some sanction

[1] 1 Cor. 11^{23-5}. The Lukan account (22^{19}) takes over the words of S. Paul.

[2] Mark 6^{13}.

[3] James 5^{14}.

in him, if we could remove the notion that these are precisely seven, no more and no less, to be enforced with multitudinous definitions and limitations, with the genial anathema of the Council of Trent for those who prefer the teaching of Christ and the freedom of the Gospel; for the difference here is the difference between the Sabbath of the Pharisees and the Sabbath as it was observed by Jesus and his Apostles, and that is fundamental. Regarded thus in the light of Christ as representing deep principles of religious action, all Christians can agree that we have his sanction not only for Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Unction of the Sick (not of the dying), but also for Confirmation (in his blessing of little children), for Penance, in his teaching of forgiveness—only that Penance is then resolved back, as are all the others, into the very plain teaching of Christ, and his teaching about Penance is that God forgives us immediately when we repent, making no condition except that we forgive others—as well as for Holy Matrimony, in his teaching, and even for Holy Order if we are content to regard this, the last added to the seven, as the commissioning of particular persons to do special work for God.

We have now endeavoured to discover what

our Lord taught about prayer, and we have divided the subject into three parts—Prayer in the more specialised sense, Public Worship, and Sacramental Act.

1. The Prayer which Jesus practised himself and encouraged, but did not enforce among his disciples, is on the one side Receptive, on the other Co-operative. Such prayer is primarily individual and private; but it enters also into the two other methods which are public in their nature.

2. Public Worship, which Jesus attended both in its simple and in its ceremonial forms. He approved both methods in principle, but he laid down no laws, since his way was never that of the legislator: we cannot therefore claim his authority for any one method—still less for any rule or detail; but we can be sure from the whole tenour of his message that he enforced nothing, sought no uniformity, left his disciples free to do as they should think best under God's guidance. He was the friend of beauty; but bondage to forms was completely alien to his spirit, and if he was catholic in his support of the traditional and general worship, he was deliberately non-conformist when, as in the case of the Sabbath, human freedom was infringed.

3. Jesus took part in two dramatic and symbolic acts. It is held by some scholars that neither the

act of symbolic washing nor that of a religious meal was established by him as a law for his followers, and it is certainly true that he never legislated. His method was that of liberty: he gave examples, and was himself the great example. His immediate followers did not, so far as we know, imitate all the ceremonies attributed to him—the anointing, for instance, of a blind man's eyes with clay (as recorded by John [1]) or the washing of the Disciples' feet; but we learn from the New Testament that they did imitate him in the celebration of baptism and of a religious meal—and this is recorded in the earliest of all the records [2]—as well as in the anointing of the sick for religious psycho-therapy.

[1] John 9^{6}. It is interesting to remember that in a later age S. Bernard called the ceremonial washing of feet a sacrament.

[2] *E.g.* for Baptism, Gal. 3^{27} (before A.D. 55), 1 Cor. 1^{13-16}; for the Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. 11^{20-34} (*c.* A.D. 55)—some twenty years earlier than S. Mark's Gospel.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IN THE FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES

Because we are likely to find in the earliest worship of the Christian Church the nearest approach to the mind of Jesus Christ as the survivors of his immediate disciples understood it, and because the principles of that early worship have never been entirely forsaken, however much they may have been neglected or overlaid, it will be worth our while to examine that early worship in more detail than we can afford for the history of Christian worship as a whole. There is no inherent virtue in antiquity; but in the first century, if anywhere, we shall find the principles which Christ had taught, and in the second century we shall see those principles in their first marked development. The subject, for all its importance, has been generally ignored, and people are apt to think too much of the fourth, eighth, and thirteenth centuries when they discuss the history of public worship. Our evidence, it is true, is still tantalisingly small; but we are much

richer both in documents and monuments than our fathers were fifty years ago, and we can fill in some outlines at least of the picture.

I. The First Century

We must, however, guard ourselves against two dangers: The first, that of filling the gaps in our knowledge by imagining features of which we have no evidence; because we shall in such case almost inevitably introduce matter of a far later date—as Walter Pater introduced the Kyrie Eleison into *Marius the Epicurean*, to mention only one of the mistakes in that beautiful description of an early Christian service. The second danger is that of arguing from silence and assuming the necessary absence of things which do not happen to be mentioned in the scanty documents at our disposal. Between these two extremes it may be possible to steer with some degree of security, if we preserve a rigid devotion to historic truth, unbiassed by any controversial desire to justify by antiquity the ideas or practices of the Middle Ages, the Reformation, or the present day.

1. *Before A.D.* 100

Certainly, if we were transported into the first century we should not find what most of us expected, or what any of us are accustomed to.

We should be surprised, and perhaps startled. Even among those who have read Duchesne's *Origines du Culte Chrétien*, for instance, there must be many who have not realised the Sunday service which he briefly mentions; for he does not try to make a picture of the whole for us, but leaves us to take the various elements and put them together for ourselves. But he is quite definite about the main facts: the Sunday service consisted of the Eucharist—it was the principal service (since nothing like Mattins or Evensong existed in the primitive Church), but it did not stand alone. It was preceded by the Agapè and was followed by what Duchesne calls a liturgy of the Holy Spirit, "a real liturgy with real presence and communion." The Sunday gathering consisted thus of three acts—a Love-feast, the Eucharist, Spiritual Exercises; and if we were able to walk into a service of the first century it is this last which would undoubtedly strike us most.

But before we try to describe these acts let us try and imagine the scene of the Sunday gathering. The early Christians certainly did not "go to church" in the catacombs, as is popularly supposed. The chapels were for services in commemoration of the departed; and these Agapès and Eucharists, memorial feasts or services, go back on positive monumental evidence to the

first half of the second century, and existed, I believe scholars would be agreed, in the first. As, however, the Roman catacombs are almost all that remains to us of pre-Constantinian date, we have to go to them for evidence as to the manner in which the Lord's Supper was celebrated. It was celebrated as a common meal in the time of S. Paul; the frescoes show that it was still so celebrated in the first half of the second century, at least in the catacombs, where only a few could assemble in the small chapels in which funeral and anniversary services were held. We do not know exactly when it became otherwise; but certainly the change must have been gradual, and customs must have varied in different parts of the Church. The statement by S. Clement of Rome, at the end of the first century, that the bishop or presbyter celebrated, assisted by deacons, suggests the possibility that even then, in the normal worship above ground, the common meal may have developed into a rather more ceremonial action, when there was a larger congregation. Our earliest positive evidence, however, lies between A.D. 100 and 150, and from this we learn that the little congregation in a subterranean chapel still reclined round a table. This evidence comes from the *Capella greca* in the catacomb of Priscilla, of which we shall speak later.

In the first century people must have worshipped

generally in private houses, except for their funeral services. We may safely suppose a considerable variety of accommodation; but the congregations would naturally choose a large house when they could get one, and before the end of the century some very important persons had become Christian. In the persecution of Domitian, A.D. 95, Manias Acilius Glabro, who had been consul with Trajan four years before, was martyred: and the first to fall under Domitian was his own first cousin, the consul Titus Flavius Clemens, whose two sons had been adopted by Domitian as his successors. But for this outbreak of persecution, a Christian might thus have become Emperor within the first century. It is suspected moreover from an allusion in Tacitus that the father of the martyred Clemens, Titus Flavius Sabinus, the elder brother of the Emperor Vespasian and prætor under Nero in 64, was also a Christian. Now under the great estates of a branch of the Flavian family there still exists the Christian cemetery of Domitilla. It is thus highly probable that Christian services were held in some building (a hall or church in fact), or in the atrium of a house, near the still extant entrance to this catacomb. The entrance to the cemetery of Domitilla is a somewhat imposing piece of architecture, and near it, within the garden, there

is a room which was built for the funeral Agapè, with kitchen, well, and cistern still surviving. Thus, though there is probably no actual church in existence of earlier date than that of Constantine, we have in this first-century room something very near it. And perhaps other and still more important discoveries await us.

We may think, then, of the first-century service as taking place, sometimes in the atrium of a Roman house, sometimes in the peristyle of a Greek one, or in the large "upper room" of a Syrian one, or often in a smaller room of some humble dwelling, or sometimes perhaps, even as early as this, in a small hall specially constructed, and sometimes in an out-house or barn quietly set apart for the purpose. Both "hall-churches" (as Harnack calls them) and basilicas certainly existed after the middle of the second century.

Let us, then, imagine a body of Christians gathered together in the atrium of a private house. The bishop or presbyter presides, wearing a pallium (familiar to us still as the conventional over-garment of our Lord and the Apostles in most religious pictures) flung over the shoulder of his white tunic. The little congregation dispose themselves on the divan for the simple love-feast, mainly of bread and wine, and the bishop says a prayer. Such a prayer—emanating from Syria

about the time of the Fourth Gospel—is that given in the *Didachè*, which can hardly be Eucharistic (if the distinction can yet be made) but rather a prayer to be offered at a common meal of Christians—at an Agapè in fact—since the writer goes on to say, "After ye are filled, then give thanks," and gives them a grace after meat. The prayer opens with the words: "First, as touching the cup: 'We give thanks to thee, our Father, for the holy vine of thy servant David, which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant: to thee be the glory for ever.' But as touching the broken bread: 'We give thanks to thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant: to thee be the glory for ever. As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, and being gathered together became one, so let thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy Kingdom.'"

Quite customary things often escape notice in literature, and we should not have known much about the Agapè or "Lord's Supper" in the first century if S. Paul had not rebuked certain excesses in his first letter to the Corinthians. But we must not think of the abuse of a rite if we are to attempt an historical reconstruction, only of its normal and proper use. The Agapè, then,

was a real meal at which people ate till they were satisfied, and we may suppose that they conversed freely, but soberly and religiously (as we learn from Tertullian they did a century later). It seems probable that, after the grace, certain portions of the bread and wine were set apart with special prayer and then eaten solemnly as the Eucharist. This would account for the difficulty of distinguishing between the Eucharist and the Agapè in S. Paul. Indeed the prayer in the *Didachè* belongs to a place and time in which, as Bishop Maclean says, "The Agapè and the Eucharist were probably one rite."

Was there a "Liturgy of the Catechumens," an Ante-Communion, between the Agapè and the Liturgy of the Faithful, or Communion proper? In the middle of the second century we learn from S. Justin Martyr that there certainly was; and as this part of the service was taken over from the Jewish worship of the synagogue, it seems most unlikely that the Christians of S. Justin's time had not inherited it from the Church of the first century, when "they continued stedfastly in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the [accompanying] prayers." One feature we know from the New Testament had come down from the Apostles—the sermon. Letters like those of S. Paul must also have been

read when the congregation addressed was gathered together, and one would suppose either just before the Communion began, or (but it is mere conjecture that there was any reading at this meal) during the Agapè.

The singing of psalms is not mentioned by S. Justin, but we know that the practice was early enough—indeed, we hear about it in the New Testament. We may therefore conclude with much probability that, without there being any rule or uniformity, the eucharistic part of the meal was in the first century preceded by a preparatory service containing prayers, reading, preaching, and the singing of psalms. This is rendered the more probable from the fact, to which everything points, that the early Church had very long services. After or during the Agapè, then, we may suppose, readers stood up and read extracts from the Old Testament, psalms were sung, and the president expounded the lessons to be learned from what had been read. At what time Gospels came to be read I do not know; perhaps not till the second century, though it seems natural to suppose that readings about the life of Christ (some of them apocryphal) came in earlier than that, at least in certain places. If not, there must have been a good deal of what Justin calls "the memoirs of the Apostles" in the

president's discourse. There must have been a collection too, sometimes, at some point; for the New Testament speaks of this.

Let us add a touch of colour. We are assembled in an atrium with marble columns; on the walls are frescoes of beasts and cupids and birds and wreaths of flowers. In some places the frescoes are newer, here an indelicate picture, and here an idolatrous one, has been painted over; and there is instead—here a picture of a young shepherd in red cloak and in buskins, carrying a sheep upon his shoulders, and here Daniel standing naked between two lions, and on the frieze an anchor, with fishes swimming about. The people gathered in the place know what these things mean. They are curiously mixed as to class and age; and the slaves grin a little awkwardly, and the slave-girls blush, because of the fine company who come to eat and drink with them. The moon slants up, casting a long shadow across the marble floor, and causing the water to twinkle in the impluvium. Little children play quietly in and out the columns during the reading. A baby cries, and his mother, who is too poor to leave him behind, takes him into one of the side-rooms to quiet him. . . .

These things must have happened often enough; and wonderful and touching scenes there must have been in the days of persecution, and on the

anniversaries of martyrs; but such occasions have been well described by the writers of fiction. We are only concerned here with an attempt to discover a few of the common facts.

The love-feast is over, or rather it has become eucharistic. The bread and wine are set apart on the tripod, round which the people have been reclining—one imagines a second *sigma* being placed on the other side of the tripod, making a complete circle round it, to accommodate more people; but this may be a wrong guess.[1] The president then (perhaps, already, beginning with the blessing, "The Lord be with you," and the great cry, "Lift up your hearts," which, all are agreed, form the earliest liturgical formula we know of) says the Great Thanksgiving, which includes, though in no set form of words, the setting apart or consecration of the elements. He would perhaps stand to do this: standing, not kneeling, was the attitude for prayer. At the conclusion of the "giving of thanks," all said "Amen." Sitting down (as in the fresco of the *Fractio Panis*), the president now breaks the small round loaves. We do not know any more; but perhaps the deacons brought the broken bread as well as the wine from the table to the people, as they leant over the cushion of the *pulvinus* or *sigma*.[1] We know that

[1] See p. 80.

the deacons administered in both kinds, in the next century. Doubtless other extempore prayers would be said at the conclusion, and they may have already in the first century followed the main outlines which the liturgies of the fourth show; but we do not know, and two or three centuries are a long time.

Then came the third service, the Spiritual Exercises, and we need an effort to realise its great importance—to realise indeed its very existence. We learn about it mostly from the 14th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians; and the *Didachè* throws light on the continuance of it some two or three generations later in an outlying part of the Church. It would have much amazed us. The best way to appreciate it is to translate the summary description of Duchesne from the second chapter of his *Origines* :—

> These [the spiritual exercises] held a very large place in the Christian service as it is represented to us by the most ancient documents. After the Eucharist inspired persons begin to speak, and to manifest before the assembly the presence of the Spirit that animates them. Prophets, ecstatics, the speakers with tongues, the interpreters, the faith-healers (*médecins surnaturels*), now take up the attention of the faithful. There is as

> it were a liturgy of the Holy Spirit after the liturgy of the Christ, a real liturgy, with real presence and communion. The inspiration can be felt; it thrills the organs of some privileged persons; but the whole congregation is moved, edified, and even ravished to a greater or less extent, and transported, in the divine spheres of the Paraclete.

In our discussions of primitive liturgies we are apt to forget this astonishing feature, or to be rather complacent about our loss of it. Certainly it could not be artificially revived; but if we lived more in the spirit, such spiritual exercises, in some form or other, would perhaps come back of their own accord.

II. The Second Century, before 150

The first-century service, then, was very different from that which we commonly associate with ecclesiastical tradition—was in fact, as Duchesne again points out in the *Early History of the Church*, a common evening meal. The great change to a service of the kind with which we are more familiar must have happened somewhere about the middle of the second century—a period which is passed over lightly in the *Origines* by Duchesne, who strides from the first century to the fourth. Now, in the fourth century we have a highly

developed type of service. Choirs, for instance, and incense are among the things we find, besides new festivals like Christmas Day, and such dramatic Holy Week ceremonies as we read of in the *Pilgrimage of Etheria*. Indeed by that time the general aspect of services was not very unlike that of the Eastern Churches at the present time.

But from our earliest account of a second-century service (and the documents are very meagre) to the Peace of the Church is just about two hundred years, which is a long time—nearly as long as the life of S. Paul's Cathedral, which was not actually finished till 1710; longer than the period between the death of Queen Anne and the death of King Edward VII. The Peace of the Church was in 313, and Pliny's account of Christian worship is *c.* 112. And Pliny does not help us much; for he was a pagan writing about matters that he did not understand, and—which is also important to remember—he got his information from prisoners, who were also renegades.

> "They maintained," he wrote to Trajan, "that all their fault or error was this, that they had been accustomed on a fixed day to meet before dawn and sing antiphonally a hymn to Christ as to a god; and that they bound themselves by a solemn pledge

(*sacramento*), not for any crime, but to abstain from theft. . . . After this was done, they dispersed, and assembled again to share a common meal of innocent food; and even this, they said, they had given up after I had issued the edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I prohibited the existence of clubs."

Here we have unmistakably the account of prisoners trying to exculpate themselves, and to minimise what had been done. We have sometimes read into it more than is really there—an "early celebration," in fact, a *sacrament* "before dawn." But the more we find out about this period, the less probable it appears that "*sacramentum*" was really a name for the Christian service, overheard and misunderstood by Pliny. The use of the word in the sense so familiar to us is unlikely; and it is pretty certain that "*sacramentum*" was used in its ordinary meaning, at that time, of an oath or pledge. It has been too hastily assumed, because of this passage, that the Eucharist was by now separated from the Agapè, and celebrated in the early morning, the Agapè being relegated to the evening. That conjecture is very precarious; and the argument that the later meal had, according to Pliny, been "given up" after his edict, and therefore could

not have been the Eucharist, is vitiated by the fact that he is retailing the evidence of renegades. *They* had no doubt given up everything Christian, including the Eucharist.

We may not then assume the existence in the reign of Trajan of an "early celebration." It would seem more likely that the Church assembled for some sort of "vigil" of preparation before dawn (the night vigil can be traced to the second century), and then later on met for the Eucharist, or for the Agapè and Eucharist combined. The *sacramentum* is not in fact stated to be before dawn; and it is likely enough that Pliny mentioned it when he did in logical connection with the phrase "all their fault or error," and meant that the prisoners maintained that, so far from having committed a crime, they bound themselves (always, or in a general way) by a solemn pledge never to commit crimes at all. We shall be safer therefore to make no assumption, one way or the other, and to say that we do not know what was the time of service, or the relation between the Eucharist and the Agapè, in the first quarter of the second century. By the second quarter, Duchesne thinks, the Agapè ceased to be connected with the Eucharist—to be, as he says, a "liturgical agapè"—while it continued as "an agapè of charity," especially on

funeral occasions, down to the fifth century at least.

The other piece of evidence about this period is very different in kind, and is of enormous interest. It is not a document, but a fragment of early Christian art—the fresco, now called *Fractio Panis*, which Monsignor Wilpert discovered in the so-called *Capella greca* in the catacomb of Priscilla—and it belongs to the same period, the beginning of the second century. Its existence was unknown until Wilpert, suspecting the presence of a valuable fresco, removed the crust of stalactites which had covered it. Our scholars have been in the habit of relying almost exclusively upon documents; and even the more modern historical and liturgical works have been written in apparent ignorance of the vast amount of light which has been thrown upon the first three centuries by the recent discoveries of early monuments. Owing to the scantiness of the documents, early Christian archæology is of priceless importance; and, even apart from this consideration, we have only to imagine what our ideas of Greek and Roman history would be without the universal familiarity with classical sculpture and architecture, in order to realise how *blind* our notions of early Christian history must be until the pictured treasures of Wilpert's

Roma Sotterannea are as familiar to us as the writings of Clement of Rome or Justin Martyr. At present we may look through book after book without finding a single reference to all this, and are fortunate if we find a mention even of de Rossi, the pioneer of fifty years ago. Yet—to take one instance—the old controversies about sacramentalism, prayers for the departed, and the communion of saints, are rendered obsolete, so far as the custom of the early Church is concerned, by the discoveries of early Christian art, because they prove that (as early as the second century, when we have abundant evidence), Christian belief in these principles was intense and predominant.

This fresco *Fractio Panis* (it is reproduced also in W. Lowrie's *Christian Art and Archæology*, and in the present writer's little history of the Prayer Book) represents a Eucharist, such as was celebrated in the very chapel where the fresco still exists, a "requiem" Eucharist in fact; and it was on the tufa bench which is still there that some of the little congregation must have reclined: this bench runs along one side of the tiny chapel, and the accommodation is continued on another side by the surface of a tomb; there is no special seat for the president; doubtless there was a small table in the middle round which the participants

reclined. Seven people are represented, the president (or bishop), wearing the *tunica talaris*, and over it the teacher's pallium; five men, and one woman with her head covered (in the purely symbolical pictures of the Celestial Banquet, the women have their heads uncovered). All are reclining round the table, which is covered with a white linen cloth. On the table is a two-handled cup, a dish with five little round loaves, and also another with two fishes (introduced, doubtless, as so often elsewhere, to symbolise Christ). The moment chosen is that of the fraction: the president sits up—the chalice in front of him on the table—and with some show of force breaks one of the loaves. (We shall see that in the eighth century, this dramatic breaking of the Bread was still a vivid ceremony.[1]) The others remain reclining, their arms on the *sigma*—the great continuous cushion which lies between them and the table. In Imperial Rome slaves and women did not recline at meals, but sat upright. Here the woman is in the same position as the men, resting her elbow on the *sigma*. One imagines that it must have been one of the most striking signs of Christian brotherhood when slaves (and women) reclined at the Agapè and the Eucharist, like their masters. It would seem from this picture and from the language of

[1] See p. 113.

the New Testament, coupled with the fact that the Great Thanksgiving (corresponding to our Prayer of Consecration) was extemporary at this time, that the Fraction was the central act of the primitive Eucharist. We may conjecture that the Eucharist was at first constituted by the president taking some of the loaves of the Agapè, during the course of the meal, and, after thanksgiving, solemnly breaking them before the assembled faithful.

In the beginning of the second century, then, so far as we know, the Eucharist was still celebrated as in the last quarter of the first. We do not know of any change between A.D. 75 and A.D. 125. We only have the added touch from Pliny of the singing of hymns (probably psalms) before dawn, and a vivid idea from the *Fractio Panis* of how the Eucharist was celebrated. But in the course of the second century a great change came over the Church. The common meal was transformed into the solemn Liturgy.

III. After 150

The Eucharist became a congregational service, centred round an altar. The change took place naturally and inevitably, and no doubt gradually, because as numbers increased, the common meal became impracticable. The reason was simple:

people did not in those days sit at table. If they had, the tables could have been lengthened, and arranged, as they are at modern feasts, to hold a large number of people.

Before the age of Augustus, the Romans used the *triclinium*, with couches set at right angles; afterwards they reclined on a semicircular divan called a *sigma* or *accubitum*, on the inner side of which was a large cushion, the *pulvinus*, which extended the whole length of the semicircle. The company rested their left elbows on the long cushion as they reclined on the divan, and they reached their right hands over the cushion to take the pieces of food from the tripod which stood in the midst of the semicircle. When there were servants, the food, already cut up, was handed by them on plates to the guests; and perhaps it was this function which the deacons originally took over at the eucharistic meal.

It will be clear from this description that the simplest and most natural way of celebrating the Lord's Supper, while it would be inevitably adopted at first, would become increasingly difficult as time went on; unless the partakers were broken up into separate parties, reclining on separate divans, an arrangement which would have destroyed the very unity that it was the advantage of the common meal to emphasise, and

would have therefore seemed, one would suppose, intolerable to the early Church.

We may suppose also that, as time went on, the desire to heighten the mystery of the service worked in the same direction, till the table was not only set up at one end of the hall or church, in all the majesty of the canopied ciborium, but was hidden by curtains at the most solemn parts of the service. The process was gradual: for centuries the altar was still in theory a table surrounded by the Christian family, the higher clergy sitting in the apse behind it while the people stood in the body of the church, as the many ancient basilicas still existing bear witness: indeed in the basilicas of Rome the custom of the ministers standing behind the altar, and facing the people, still witnesses in the twentieth century to the fact that the ministers and people once gathered round a small table.

Departure from the primitive practice was thus inevitable. There was gain and there was loss. The Church lost the sacred domestic meal; she gained the solemn congregational service.

Churches, "hall-churches," were built in the second century to accommodate the growing number of worshippers, and then appeared the great architectural innovation of the Christian basilica—the parent of all the subsequent styles

of church-architecture. The earlier Christian basilicas were probably built during the almost unbroken period of peace between 160 and 303. There are allusions to separate church buildings in Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Cyprian. Porphyry complains of the Christians rivalling the temples of the old gods in the latter half of the third century, and there must have been a very large number all over the Empire when Diocletian ordered their destruction: indeed we know that the churches in Rome escaped this fate in 303, and that (four or five years after their restoration by Maxentius in 311) they were over forty in number.

There were halls or churches, then, and perhaps some of a certain importance by the middle of the second century; and at this time we find a description of a service, that of Justin Martyr.

When a writer alludes to a service at a certain date, we may generally assume that it is no new thing which he is mentioning. Justin Martyr's famous account of the Liturgy, written about A.D. 150, therefore, may well describe what had been already common by 125, and perhaps earlier; and we should probably be safe in guessing that the form of Eucharist at the end of the first century followed the main outlines of Justin's account. At least we are clear about what was done in 150 and after; and the remarkable thing

is that the service had then the four great "acts" which it has still in the Anglican Liturgies to-day, and in all other liturgies. It consisted of (1) the Preparation, (2) the Offertory, (3) the Great Thanksgiving (Anaphora, or Canon), and (4) the Communion.

On the day called the Day of the Sun, Justin says, the people gather together, and (1) the "memoirs of the Apostles, and the writings of the Prophets" are read; then the president preaches about what has been read by the reader —here are two ministers engaged. Then begins the second half of the service, known later as the Liturgy of the Faithful, with (2) the Offertory, consisting of prayer, and the bringing to the president of bread and a cup of wine mingled with water. Follows (3) the Great Thanksgiving, "the president offers up prayers and thanksgivings alike with all his might," the people saying "Amen"; and then (4) the Communion, "distribution of the elements over which thanksgiving has been uttered." The deacons administer in both kinds, and carry part of the consecrated elements to those who are absent. Almsgiving also is mentioned; and in another part of the *Apology* Justin says that the kiss of peace was given after the prayers and before the actual communion, which reminds us of the love-feast.

There is some ceremonial here, for there are three kinds of ministers: the president, the deacons (whose service is no new thing), the reader (or readers); and the Liturgy follows its ordered, dramatic progress through the four acts, as it does now. A large congregation is distinctly implied, "all those who live in the towns or in the country": they could not have all reclined on a divan, and we can hardly imagine any possible way in which groups could have been arranged in any semblance of a domestic meal: indeed the whole description suggests a congregational service. We know at all events that the problem was soon solved—if it had not been solved already—by the president (were he bishop or presbyter) sitting on his own chair, or *cathedra*, the other presbyters grouped on either side of him on benches or *subsellia*; the holy table being placed in front of them, while the people stood on the further side of the table, facing the bishop. There are no surviving churches of the second century, but there is a chapel, the Ostrian Chapel in the Catacombs, of the third century, which still contains the bishop's *cathedra*, the presbyters' *subsellia*, within a small arch (the "triumphal arch" of basilican architecture), and a room for the little congregation outside the arch. Had this arrangement been already established in the

second century? From writers who flourished before the end of that century we know for certain that it had. S. Clement was head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria in 190; Tertullian was busy writing before 200, and Origen was already coming to the fore. From these writers we learn that the *cathedra* was already a technical term, that the presbyters were "round about the throne," and "served the altar and the sacrifices." This arrangement was then certainly an established one some time in the last half of the second century (if not earlier); and it carries with it the ceremonial with which we are familiar in the fourth century, though certainly in a simpler form. It is the basilican arrangement. We learn other details from Cyprian (as, for instance, that the *Sursum Corda* and its responses were said, and that the *cathedra* was draped as a sign of honour), but that takes us to A.D. 258, which is too late for our immediate purpose; and in general there is a gap in our liturgical knowledge between Justin Martyr and the fourth century, when we are flooded with new evidence.

That the ceremonial of the Liturgy was of a striking character at the end of the second century we may infer from that of Baptism, about which we have much more evidence from the Alexandrian Fathers. At the Paschal vigil

there were lessons, hymns, and sermons—a Liturgy of the Catechumens—from nightfall till cock-crow; then the bishop blessed the water, as it ran into the tank or font, consecrated the oil of thanksgiving, and exorcised the oil of exorcism (we must remember that the early Church was obsessed with the belief in evil spirits). The Catechumens then undressed: a presbyter put the Renunciation to each, anointed him with the oil of exorcism, and delivered him to the bishop at the font. A deacon descended into the font with the candidates, and the short creed was said. After the baptism (by effusion, immersion, or under the jet of water) the bishop anointed the neophyte with the oil of thanksgiving. They then all returned into church: the bishop poured oil on the neophyte (in Africa there was no unction here), laid his hand on him, signed him with the cross, and kissed him. The Liturgy was then resumed, the Liturgy of the Faithful; the neophytes shared in bringing up the bread and wine at the Offertory. Water, and milk mingled with honey (as a sign that they had reached the promised land) were consecrated with the eucharistic oblations. The neophytes were communicated by the bishop in the consecrated bread: the presbyters and deacons giving them water, and milk with honey, and last of all the consecrated

wine. Here we seem to have a relic of the primitive combined Eucharist and Agapê.

Putting all this together, we can imagine the Liturgy in the second half of the second century as a very long and stately service, taking place sometimes perhaps still in the atrium or peristyle of a private house, but generally in a hall or in a basilica. The Liturgy of the Catechumens was very long and varied, and contained lessons read by the reader, who would have come forward in front of the holy table, and perhaps already had sometimes a small pulpit or *ambo* to read from; certainly the bishop must have found it increasingly inconvenient to preach on the lessons from his *cathedra* behind the altar, as congregations and buildings increased in size; but he probably did not yet use the *ambo* or other pulpit, because he preached sitting in a chair, at this period and later. There was of course no recitation of the Creed. The offerings of bread and wine were heaped upon the holy table, which was still a real table and still for many centuries bare of ornament; the bishop came forward from his *cathedra* to consecrate, and the presbyters must have come forward too and laid their hands also on the oblations, as they certainly did in the time of S. Cyprian. The people stood facing the apse, or whatever took its place (such as the

tablinum of a private atrium); so that ministers and people were still gathered all round the table, though they no longer reclined on divans. The deacons stood, or moved about round the table or among the people, as their services were required; and they helped to minister the Communion in both kinds. All movement was free—not pre-arranged, except that certain things had to be done in the most convenient manner: the disastrous practice of regulation had not begun.[1] There was as yet little distinction in dress; but the bishop wore the philosopher's pallium, and all had clean clothes on—not only white clothes: the long *tunica talaris* was white with narrow purple stripes, and the pallium was generally white, but the other ministers may have already worn the coloured *pænulæ* of everyday use over their tunics. There was singing of psalms, and perhaps of other hymns; the people said "Amen" after the Great Thanksgiving, and perhaps other responses. The prayers were still extemporaneous.

Christian worship began then in a table-fellowship, consecrated by the very presence of the Lord, a devout and joyful love-feast which was at once a domestic meal and a communion, as S. Paul said, of the body and blood of the Christ; its prayers were mainly thanksgivings,

[1] See pp. 109, 124.

its object the offering of praise and love to God and the reception of his Spirit in a new kind of divine fellowship; it culminated at first in ecstatic spiritual exercises. As time went on and numbers increased, it necessarily lost something of this domestic intimate character; by the end of the second century the Agapè had been separated from the Eucharist, during the third it survived as a funeral feast, and then gradually disappeared. Meanwhile, during the second century, the Eucharist had of necessity developed into a stately service, in which congregations, increasingly numerous, stood before the Lord's table, round which the ministers officiated under the bishop, who left his seat at the end of the church during the service and came forward, still facing the congregation, to offer the Great Thanksgiving which was the consecration of the elements. Because these things had to be done (as S. Paul had said) decently and in order, a ceremonial developed, a ceremonial of action, broad and stately, free from petty details, containing still many elements of improvisation, and varying freely in different parts of the Church. The development had been necessary and legitimate, the principles of Christian worship had not been lost. To us of the twentieth century the position then reached seems to be almost ideal.

CHAPTER IV

THE FORCES OF DETERIORATION

The history of Worship in the Christian Church has been in part a successful attempt to carry out the principles of Christ and in part a failure: on the one side there has been legitimate development, on the other, deterioration. The deterioration has unfortunately been emphasised by that characteristic which we inherit from primitive man—a reverence for outward observances which has made people intensely conservative about religious forms, however unmeaning or minute they may be: man has been, in the most literal meaning of the word, meticulous. Customs which are silly or superstitious have grown up unnoticed, till they became stereotyped and impossible to remove: nothing then but the violence of the more brutal type of reformer seemed to avail—like the Great Fire of London, which eliminated the plague, but destroyed the ancient beauty of a glorious city. At the present day, now that education is establishing a dynamic view of life, we are perhaps overcoming this

trick of the mind, and it may be possible for us in the future to judge religious observances on their merits: if we ever do this, we shall have become more like Christ, who accepted nothing without a moral, intellectual, or æsthetic sanction, and reformed without iconoclasm.

Thanks to the labours of ethnologists, we are better able to appreciate the atavistic forces which have entered into the development of Christian worship—have influenced the growth of the tree and blighted some of its branches. We are therefore no longer angry to-day or violent about those corruptions and superstitions which so excited our grandfathers: we understand that they had to be, since the savage lurked behind the impulses of civilised and semi-civilised man in the Early and Medieval Church—as he still does, though we hope to a reduced extent. We regret the corruptions; but we see that they could not be avoided, and that they brought gain perhaps as well as loss, in the process of religious evolution: it was lamentable, for instance, that Christians came to worship images, as they undoubtedly did—and do; but it is extremely improbable that barbarian Europe would ever have learnt Christianity at all without the deep educative power of plastic art, or that this art would escape being abused.[1]

[1] See pp. 101, 223.

Understanding all this better, as we now do, we may hope to judge the questions of worship more fairly on their merits, to find out the real truth about them, and even to carry out ourselves those reforms which are needed, both in Catholic and Protestant methods of worship.

The Christian Church, equipped by her Master, brought a new kind of worship into the world, which differed from pagan worship in being congregational, from Jewish in being sacramental, from both in its liberty, since it had at first no rules of time or place, no set forms, and no exclusive hierarchy. The old religions were centred in the sacrificial system ; the new abandoned this heritage from primitive man, and centred itself in thanksgiving : its chief service was a eucharistic meal, in which slaves and women shared the fellowship of free men without distinction of race.

Since the Church worship of the first hundred years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ would carry on much of his tradition and that of those who knew him best—and must in any case illustrate the Christian idea of prayer in its freshest originality, before it was much affected by outside influences (unless we can call the diminishing inheritance from Judaism an outside influence)—we have endeavoured in the last chapter to describe this primitive worship. Let

us now consider some of those atavistic influences which warp all movements towards a higher civilisation: these were doubtless present at the beginning, but they would naturally increase as the Church swept in her lacs and her millions of pagans, and their force would be intensified as time went on by that ingrained religious conservatism to which we have already referred.

The religion of primitive man may be summed up in the word *magic*, and magic may be explained as the exact opposite of the Lord's Prayer, since it is the attempt by man to force the unseen powers to do his will. Primitive man, misled by a mistaken application of the laws of causality, believed that things outwardly alike must have similar reality and power; he therefore made images of the spirits (in animism) or of the gods (in theism) whose wills he wished to control to his own advantage, for by possessing an image he hoped to exercise a more intimate and complete power, through prayer, incantation, or some other form of masked violence. This we now know to be the explanation of those remarkable palæolithic paintings and carvings which have been discovered in the caves of Altamira and elsewhere: their authors did not reproduce the figures of mammoths, stags, or bisons for the family's æsthetic delight in their contemplation,

but because they thought thereby to increase the animals' fertility and their own success in hunting them. Art was at first utilitarian, a form of imitative magic; and it was the great contribution of the Greeks that they first made it disinterested, existing for its own sake—for the sake, that is, of the eternal Beauty. Nor is this only true of plastic art: magic was also exercised by imitation of sound and gesture—by incantations, *mantras*, and songs, before literature and music developed; by dancing, and by the drama, which was originally the *dromenon* or "thing done," the religious rite duly executed.

The difficulty of man in the process of civilisation is not only that the ape and tiger tend to recrudescence, but the savage also; as S. Paul said, we have to put away the old man, and he is very old indeed—we can see his handiwork in the caves of Altamira: he comes up in our odd fears, our queer bursts of rage, and also in our tendency to import magic into the religion which has given us our civilisation.

As we have seen, the manner of prayer which Jesus practised and taught was the exact opposite of prayer-magic: it is the endeavour to obey, not to control: it is receptive, co-operative, eucharistic. The main stream of the Church's prayer has been of this nature, especially in the

Eucharist itself and in those venerable forms which have gathered round this, the central service of the Church. Let me give two examples of co-operative and receptive prayer (since no example is needed of that praise and thanksgiving which form the mass of the old Church services), two ancient Gelasian collects which are those for the two weeks when I happen to be writing this chapter, Easter 4 and Rogation Sunday :—

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men ; Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise ; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O Lord, from whom all good things do come ; Grant to us, thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same ; through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet the very name of Rogation reminds us that the three days before Ascension Day were originally set apart for " rogations " or litanies, in the fifth century, because of the eruptions of the volcanoes in Auvergne. There has been that other side to prayer : litanies were often used in times of epidemic, to avert the anger of a god who could not have been Love, when according to the example of Christ prayer should have taken the form of work ; it was no empty sarcasm when Charles Kingsley pointed out that in times of

pestilence people should have attended to the drains instead of going in procession, for to have done so would have been true to the principles of Christ. At the present day, some public prayer, and much, as I suppose, of that which is private, is still based upon the principles of prayer-magic.

Besides the tendency to attempt to gain control of a power supposed to be unwilling, ignorant, or malevolent, prayer-magic comes in also from that forcing of prayer which we spoke of in our first chapter—the tendency of religious ministers to ignore the religious value of a meditative and receptive life, to forget that the absorbing of goodness, truth, and beauty is itself receptive communion with God, and to teach that it is wicked not to address frequent and regular petitions to God—even that a man's religion depends upon the length of those petitions—even to the extent of overlooking the mechanical nature of long prayers in the mouths of average men. It is so difficult to make people godly without rules, and so easy with the young or the ignorant to enforce a little recitation of prayers by insistence on formal habits or customs, that the evil is inevitable. Indeed the forcing of prayer may at first have considerable good results: it is only when man reaches a higher stage of education that its evil effects become generally

noticeable, in the reaction against religious authority and the emptying of the churches. We cannot produce prayer by force: we can only produce prayer-routine and prayer-magic.

In the three great non-Christian religions we can recognise, more easily perhaps than in our own, three forms of this tendency: the mechanisms of the later Buddhism, made famous by the prayer-wheel of Tibet, the prayer-drill of Islam, and the iconolatry and idolatry of Hinduism. Into the original worship of the Christian Church these three survivals of an earlier humanity have also penetrated in greater or less degree.

1. The use of the rosary, which is said to have been introduced in the thirteenth century, comes perilously near to the use of a prayer-machine, and in many hands merits no other description; certain uses of relics, medals, and scapulars sometimes come under the same head and sometimes have to be classed as magic pure and simple. Many psychologists would add that the monstrance in exposition and benediction, if not a prayer-machine, is a machine for eliciting prayer by the hypnotic method. The burning of a candle before an image is another example of a prayer-machine: originally lights were used for æsthetic and honorific purposes, but when the votary came to light his candle and leave it to

burn for him while he went away and did something else, we can see that primitive ideas have flowed in and set up the principle of magic again. Father Tyrrell justified such practices on the ground that they helped ignorant people, and that a second-best is better than nothing at all; but such justification of the second-best is very dangerous to the principle of truth. The second-best indeed can be destructive of honesty and the enemy of the good: commercialism is not a tolerable substitute for honest trade, nor the hurdy-gurdy for music, nor betting for sport, nor candle-burning for prayer.

2. Mechanical aids to prayer have a certain effect, for psychological reasons which are now pretty well understood, but they do not generally establish communion with God. The most successful of all such methods is the prayer-drill of Islam. There are few things more impressive than the spectacle of the vast crowds who stand in the courtyards of Eastern mosques, bowing as one man to the sacred formula; and the spectacle of a single person, interrupting his work at the appointed time to carry out the same routine, is hardly less impressive. The psychological effect of this prayer-drill upon men in a certain stage of civilisation is profound, and it is nobly free from the element of magic; but it has proved powerless

to develop men higher than the standard of the average half-civilised warrior, and it does not satisfy a more educated humanity. We can understand that Christ ignored all such methods and systems and mechanical helps because he saw further into the possibilities of human nature; but we may admit that prayer-drill has sometimes found its way none the less into Christian worship. To a Catholic, accustomed to a more free and easy behaviour, the stiffness and formality of Protestant worship savours of the barrack-yard: to a Protestant, the Catholic sometimes falls into prayer-drill, as when ceremonies drift from their æsthetic origin into the mechanical performance of merit-earning acts—the repetition of litanies, for instance, consisting of names of the saints or of epithets applied to S. Mary, seem to be little more than prayer-drill; and the impression is increased when such things are said in procession, however ill-drilled the procession may be.

When bodies of men came to live together in monastic communities, after the hermit movement of the fourth century, the use of some sort of prayer-drill became inevitable—and indeed, considering what the earlier monks did for civilisation, became for that era necessary—because the monastic community would include many who had not any special gift of prayer, and,

if they were to spend many hours night and day in church, their time had to be filled up somehow. The difficulty was met by the daily recitation of the Psalter, and a better method could not have been devised; but the survival of the practice into modern times enforces a vast amount of lip-drill upon the average priest. It would, we believe, be a real spiritual gain to him if he could recover his freedom; but indeed we are all prone to the habit, even when we are not compelled to it, and the Protestant who notes how mechanically some people make the sign of the cross has to remember that kneeling down may also be a mechanical act. Christ gave us the freedom of the Spirit: we easily lose it, in our attempts to make the great privilege of prayer more general, more authoritative, and more easy.

3. Iconolatry is so prevalent both in the East and West, and has occasioned so much controversy, that we shall have to refer to it again.[1] The cultus of images was not alluded to by Christ; but it was clearly incompatible with his teaching; and the Church of the first three centuries, while making free use of pictorial art and of figure-representation, severely avoided at first any representation that could be made an object of worship. Gradually, of course, the distinction

[1] See p. 116.

was lost: the habits of primitive man were unrestrained in paganism, and pagan influence increased in the Church as Jewish influence declined. As we have already referred to the subject of images, we need not here attempt to sketch the history of iconolatry and of the iconoclastic reactions of the eighth and sixteenth centuries. We will only draw attention to the fact that iconolatry is more pronounced in some places at the present day than ever before, as will be clear from a study of documents and monuments, and especially of those pictures of church interiors which we have in some quantity from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the churches were more like an Anglican cathedral of the present day than anything that is now to be found on the Continent of Europe. Churches abroad vary indeed considerably, and the cathedrals generally exhibit more restraint than the parish churches; but there are many which seem to the Englishman who has travelled in Asia unpleasantly like the familiar joss-house—indeed I remember with something like shame the contemptuous astonishment of one of my Indian Muslim students, on his return from a journey across Europe, as he asked what was the difference between the churches he had seen and the temples of Hinduism. The "joss-house" form of

Christianity exists; and it flourishes, partly because at the Reformation the chief restraining elements in Europe were separated into other Churches and their influence lost where it was most needed, partly because since the Reformation there has been a progressive loss of the more educated people among the Latin races, and the churches have unconsciously adapted themselves more and more to the ignorant. We shall gain nothing by shutting our eyes to the fact that the cult-image flourishes in Christendom to-day, because ideas and impulses inherited from our savage ancestry still contaminate the common religion of Christendom.

CHAPTER V

THE CHANGES OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

The chief services of the Church have always been the most free from corruption, because of their venerable antiquity; for the spirit of conservatism militates against accretion; though, when accretions have once crept in, the same spirit makes them very difficult to remove. When the services came to be fixed and written down, the change in their ritual was slow, though in the process of a millenium and a half it has come to be considerable; but ceremonial is more fluid, and an important element of change in public worship has been the development of the more trivial kinds of ceremonial, and the gradual loss of freedom.

Recent discoveries have shown that there was more ceremonial even in the second century than used to be supposed, and that even in the first century the little Christian communities delighted in pictorial art. We should naturally expect this, because Christian worship was from the first the expression of a great happiness; and

happiness expresses itself by action, and its conception of the glory of salvation was (as the Apocalypse shows) one of great magnificence: at the same time it inherited from the Jewish Church the tradition of a magnificent ceremonial, and had at its disposal the skill of those Greek artists who were busy all over the Empire, and not least in Rome, where, through the accident of the preservation of the catacombs, we find abundant evidence of the free and joyful use of art, even in these gloomy places—an art gay and free, distinguished from that of paganism only by its symbolic character, its sacramentalism, and its chastity.

Although our earliest descriptions of the eucharistic ceremonial, which are of the fourth century, come from the East, something like a picture of the chief service in Rome in the third century is flashed upon our minds by a reference in Eusebius to the fact that the bishop had to assist him seven deacons, seven subdeacons, forty-two acolytes, and fifty-two other ministers: there must have been something military in the aspect of so great a company—in their long white tunics and dalmatics, with the purple clavi, and the splashes of red and brown of their over-garments—standing, each in the company of his order, to carry out his part around the altar

of one of the Roman basilicas. The richness of these basilicas under Constantine early in the next century almost passes the imagination, in its vast profusion of gold and silver and its thousands of lamps and candles. Some of the basilicas still remain, with some of the fourth-century mosaics which belong to the same class and family of great art as the mosaics and frescoes of Rusuti and Cavallini in the thirteenth century, or the frescoes of Raphael and Michelangelo in the sixteenth.

The fourth-century worship in the East can be reconstructed from the handbooks, Church Orders such as the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the more recently discovered *Testament of the Lord*; and they throw some light back on the centuries preceding. The Ante-Communion service begins with prayer and the singing of psalms, during which the small loaves of bread (they were like our rolls) and flasks of wine are brought in, and a cloud of incense ascends as the bishop rises from his throne in the centre of the apse and carries the censer round the sanctuary where the clergy are sitting or standing in their degrees. The Lessons follow, the Old Testament Lesson, the Epistle, the Gospel, psalms interspersed with refrains being sung between the readings: for the Gospel all stand, and incense is again burnt.

Next, the sermons, delivered by the priests in turn and by the bishop last of all; after which comes the dismissal of the catechumens and others (they are still urgently bidden to depart in the Eastern Church, so curiously are obsolete forms preserved): the dismissal takes some time; for each class excluded from the Holy Mysteries has its own silent prayer, deacon's litany, and episcopal blessing, before it goes out. The Liturgy of the Faithful begins with a deacon's litany (as still in the East); then, after a solemn prayer by the bishop, follows the Kiss of Peace, the clergy embrace one another, and the lay folk, women kissing women only. The Offertory of the bread and wine takes place, loaves and chalices being set upon the holy table: two deacons wave fans over the offerings to keep flies away: the bishop washes his hands, and puts on festal robes. The eucharistic prayer begins with "Lift up your hearts" and the *Sanctus*, all the presbyters going to the altar with the bishop and standing there to assist in the consecration of the bread and wine, while the other ministers stand around in their order; the Great Thanksgiving ends with intercessions and the Lord's Prayer. All receive the Communion (the bishop saying to each, "The body of Christ," and the deacon, "The blood of Christ, chalice of life," with the response,

"Amen"), the clergy first in their orders, then the consecrated widows and virgins, the newly baptised, and the rest of the congregation, while the thirty-fourth psalm is sung—"I will always give thanks unto the Lord." After the bishop has prayed, he blesses the people, and the deacon bids them depart in peace.

It needs an effort to remember the little-realised fact that the whole action was now marred by an astonishing paraphernalia of curtains which from the fourth century onwards divided the carefully segregated people into blind compartments, when these curtains were drawn or unknotted for the more solemn part of the Liturgy. We have a detailed description of them in the *Charta Cornutiana* of 471. The nave, oddly enough, was left unoccupied except by deacons, other ministers, and singers — a relic, possibly, of the days when worship took place in the atrium of a private house—and the people were disposed in the aisles and transepts, catechumens and penitents being curtained off at the back of the nave. Not only were curtains drawn round the four sides of the ciborium-canopy over the altar, when the solemn action began, but curtains hung between the sanctuary and the nave; they hung also between the columns that formed the aisles, and these were

unknotted, so that the people were cut off in the aisles and transepts. In many fifth and sixth-century churches the holes can still be seen where the curtain-rods were fixed, about nine feet from the ground; and there is a mosaic of the sixth century showing the palace of Theodoric in the church of S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, which shows exactly how the tapestries were hung from rods between the columns and looped up when out of use. Another mosaic in S. George, Salonika, shows an altar with the ciborium curtains drawn in front of it, while a man and a woman, each wearing the pænula (chasuble), stand on either side of it, their hands stretched out in the attitude of *orantes*.[1] This strange innovation, which excluded the people from direct participation in the highest acts of worship and divided them up in carefully distinguished classes, must have marked the final extinction of the original table-fellowship idea of worship. It may have been borrowed from the pagan temples, where congregational worship was unknown and curtains formed an important feature. The practice disappeared in the West, after five centuries which must have left a deep mark on Christian tradition; but the Armenian Church still draws a curtain in front

[1] These are both reproduced on p. 332 of Mr. Walter Lowrie's *Christian Art and Archæology*. Macmillan, 1901.

of the altar before the Anaphora, and in the Orthodox Church the veil has become a solid wall with curtained doors.

The fourth century is also notable because at this time the old method of prayer begins to change. Formerly there was a well understood skeleton structure, marked out by cues like the "*Sursum corda*" where the people joined in, but the celebrant made his own prayers. Now, however, extemporaneous prayer is being gradually displaced by fixed compositions, as bishops like Serapion, the friend of Athanasius, whose eucharistic prayer has been discovered, write down the formula which they are in the habit of using.[1] Many inconveniences were thus avoided, many fine forms preserved; but a serious step was taken towards the loss of freedom, and the fixing of undesirable accretions was made possible.

Another step is taken in the same period away from the earlier freedom by the issue of a few canons, one of the earliest of which is that of the Council of Nicæa which forbids kneeling in Eastertide and on all Sundays, because each Sunday is a little Easter and men must stand in commemoration of the Resurrection. This canon

[1] Some liturgical formularies can be traced earlier than the fourth century, as *e.g.* the passage in the *Didachè*, quoted on p. 66—not to mention the Lord's Prayer. See Probst, *Liturgie der Drei Ersten Jahrhunderte.*

is still partly observed by all ministers at the chief Sunday service, the Eucharist.

Given the fixed liturgy and the fixed regulation of ceremonial, there can be little in a service of any of the Eastern Churches to-day which would have appeared strange to a Christian of the fourth century, except the vestments. Yet even the vestments in both East and West to-day are but the everyday garments of the fourth century—indeed of the first and second centuries—in an ornate form, rendered less beautiful by the stiffening and cutting down which follows in the wake of excessive ornament. Even in the first century, Christian presiding officers seem to have worn the pallium (Justin mentions it in the second), a garment which had much the same significance as the doctor's gown to-day; by the fifth century, officials, both lay and ecclesiastical, were wearing the pænula (now called the chasuble) over their tunic and dalmatic, because this dress had passed out of everyday use—much as legal wigs and robes are retained at the present day. There are many extant mosaics of the sixth century which show bishops thus attired (with the addition of the pallium, now folded into a strip), and deacons wearing the dalmatic; but these were their ordinary official costumes, not as yet restricted to use in church. To-day their

ornate quality and the reduced size of the clerical garments would therefore strike a fourth-century observer as a little strange in Moscow or in Rome; and he would think the service rather poverty-stricken in the matter of assistants. He would miss, even in S. Peter's, except at some special function, the troops of ministers; and he would be very much surprised at the spectacle of a priest saying a low Mass with only a serving boy; but that last stage of ceremonial declension he would never witness even to-day if he confined himself to the Eastern Churches.

There has thus been in the last thousand years a decrease in the general standard of breadth and stateliness, balanced by a considerable increase in the performance of minutiæ, which grew up through individual fancies and gradually found their way into directories and rubrics. Free movement developed gradually and very slowly into the codified drill with which we are familiar.

We know very little about the details of public worship in the West till about the seventh century; but for the eighth we are given a full description, founded upon an earlier document, of the papal mass in a great Roman basilica on a high festival. The pomp is stupefying; one can only give an idea of its elaboration to the modern British reader by comparing it to

such a function as a coronation in Westminster Abbey. It would take a book to describe it.[1] I need only here point out that the ritual embodied in the action and ornaments of the fifty or sixty ministers and the many lay officials who took part in it was the Roman Liturgy, still even to-day sober and restrained in comparison with more modern services, and simpler then than it is now; and that the great basilicas were then, like other churches, simple even to austerity—the altar stood over a martyr's tomb, inaccessible from the front, bare of ornament under its massive canopy, and the church must be imagined without the side-chapels, shrines, and decorated images of later and weaker generations, depending for its splendour mainly upon the dusky glow of its mosaics, the glitter of innumerable lamps, and the gleam of its gold and silver plate. We have also to remember that there had been, from at least the fourth century, four curtains hanging from the four sides of the ciborium or altar-canopy, as well as elsewhere, and that these were drawn during the more solemn parts of the service: thus the celebrant, though he faced the people in basilican churches,

[1] Such a book is *Ordo Romanus Primus*, the Latin text with English translation, introduction, and notes by E. G. Cuthbert F. Atchley. Moring, 1905.

in the West (he may always have faced the other way in the East) did not see them, nor they him.

One action only need be mentioned here, as showing how different were the ideas of the sacramental presence from those which grew up in the later Middle Ages[1]:—After the consecration, the pope performed the fraction by breaking one of the small loaves. When he had returned to his *cathedra*, three officials went up to him and inquired the names of those he wished to ask to breakfast; they then went at once to pass the invitations to the guests. The acolytes then took the consecrated loaves in linen bags to the bishops and priests sitting round the apse: when each had taken his loaf, they all at a signal from the pope broke their loaves simultaneously. When the clergy had communicated, part of the wine in the chalice was poured into large bowls of unconsecrated wine, and from these the people were communicated by means of metal tubes, after they had received the consecrated bread. We can see in all this the still lingering idea of the social meal, as well as the great importance still attached to the breaking of the bread.

[1] The era of definition did not begin till the eighth century. In the fourth, the doctrine even of S. Augustine was so vague that Harnack has maintained that Augustine's view was that of Zwingli—the extreme Protestant doctrine.

It was not till the fourth century that other services besides the Eucharist were regularly established. In the third century there had only been vigils—preparation services from the evening to the morning before the Eucharist (the "all-night" service still goes on in the Orthodox East); but in the fourth, when persecution was over, and the ascetic lives of the Egyptian hermits began, daily services come into evidence. In Egypt, *c.* 350, there was a simple daily morning and evening service, consisting only of twelve psalms and two lessons, followed by silent prayer: the usage spread, and in A.D. 387 was introduced into Milan by S. Ambrose who also was a promoter of hymnody: Rome did not follow the example till later. The *Apostolic Constitutions* show that in Syria, *c.* 375, hymns and canticles as well as psalms were sung, and that already a more elaborate system of services had grown up—at Dawn, at the Third Hour, the Sixth, the Ninth, at Evening, and at Cock-crow. Gradually the obligation to recite daily services was (like celibacy in some parts of the Church) extended from monastic bodies to the ordinary clergy: in Rome this seems to have begun in the sixth century, and in the East the Emperor Justinian made a law that the parish clergy should sing Vespers, Mattins, and

Lauds. In the same century (A.D. 528) S. Benedict issued his famous rule, which prescribed for monks among other duties a cycle of eight hour-services a day, Mattins being said at about 2 a.m.[1] This was the foundation of the Breviary, which in turn grew longer and more elaborate, till it became an obligation (on all the clergy, as well as on monks) which took up a good many hours of the day. Thus did the idea develop that prayer is the methodical recitation of lengthy chains of words.

Legendary matter and other abuses grew up in the Middle Ages; and their removal was the reason given for the Reformation of the services in the Preface still retained in the Book of Common Prayer. Mattins and Evensong, translated, simplified, and greatly shortened, became the popular services of England after the Reformation. Metrical paraphrases of the Psalms were published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and these with Bible-readings, hymns, prayer, and a sermon, carrying on the fourth-century tradition, became the normal service of the other Reformed Churches, in the place of the more primitive Sunday Eucharist.

[1] It is noteworthy that S. Benedict only contemplated about two celebrations of the Eucharist a week,—on Sundays and the greater festivals.

In the fourth century also, with the great influx of half-converted pagans into the Church began that tendency in popular devotion already referred to, which manifests itself clearly in the hieratic art of the sixth-century mosaics. Christian art after the fourth century began to enter its iconolatrous phase, which thenceforward existed side by side with the earlier historic, didactic, and symbolic tradition, acquiring a supremacy over the latter which lasted throughout the Middle Ages, and which was not lost till the great painters who arose in the thirteenth century—Cavallini, Cimabue, Duccio, and Giotto—restored movement and life into art. Professor Della Seta, in his great work, *Religione e arte figurata*, has made the useful distinction between iconolatry and idolatry, and between the cult-image and the idol invested with the properties of magic : they are different things, but both were firmly resisted by the pre-Constantinian Church, and both are against the true spirit of Christianity ; we can be sure that nothing would have seemed more incredible to the Apostles and their successors than that a Christian church would ever exhibit cult-images, surrounded by kneeling devotees, and adorned with those votive-offerings which are a sure sign of misuse.

The Church was right in using pictorial and

plastic art, for its educative as well as its æsthetic value: indeed she could never have taught her message of the divinity revealed in human form without it, and to-day everyone agrees in principle as to the use of art in churches, however much that use may vary in degree—the exclusion of art would be a blasphemy against the beauty of God; but none the less, as Della Seta says, at certain periods the cult-images have been, and in certain classes of society still are, credited with powers equal to those which in earlier religions have been attributed to idols. The reaction of Iconoclasm in the eighth and ninth centuries showed how deeply the evil had penetrated in the Eastern Churches, and how Christians had been put to shame by the sudden contrast with the new forces of Islam—free at least from the sin of idolatry; the revolt of the Albigenses, of Wyclif, Huss and the later Reformers showed that this, like other abuses, had not been removed during the course of the Middle Ages; nor has the attempt succeeded of the Eastern Churches to remove the evil by proscribing any *ikon* in such high relief that the nose of the figure can be pinched between the thumb and forefinger.

The main cure for the disease is education; without education superstition will always flood into religion, even where the representation of

the humblest animals is forbidden, as it is by Islam. We are not directly concerned with the question of the fine arts in this book, and have only to mention the cult-image because it still provides a large part of the popular devotion among the majority of Christians, and has had a large share in the displacement of the original services of the Church by devotions which are in contradiction to their spirit. It is, however, worth pointing out that the appearance of the cult-image in the sixth century was a backward step in art as well as in religion: the cult-image can be easily distinguished by its being isolated, inert, and frontally presented. When sculpture began to free itself in the twelfth, and painting in the thirteenth century, the figures came to life again, began to occupy themselves, and ceased to stare at the spectator. At the present day it is still true that fine works of art are never worshipped (unless they are hidden away, as in the case of Bellini's Madonna behind a grating in S. Francesco della Vigna at Venice): they stand neglected by all except the traveller, while the *dévotes* and peasants kneel before some archaic painting, or more generally before a contemptibly impossible figure in coloured plaster. The typical cult-image appeals to the egoism of the worshipper, his desire to substitute his own will for the will of

God and his own interests for those of humanity—to the primitive idea of magic, in fact; therefore it stands in lifeless isolation: the images of the Madonna and Child, however archaic, never fulfilled this purpose; they represented two persons in living relationship with one another, they were the embodiment of a historic fact, and of the eternal idea of maternal relationship. Therefore when this vital love between the mother and child was emphasised by Giotto and his immediate predecessors, the Madonna and Child began to appeal more to the spiritual side of man and to decrease still more in value as a cult-image; till, as at the present day, the beautiful statues and pictures are left to crumble away uncared for, or half-hidden behind some irrelevance (as in the case of Michelangelo's Madonna at Bruges), while the popular plaster-image represents the Mother without her Child. It was the fatal mistake of the Reformers (though less in Germany than in this country) that they did not distinguish between art and idolatry, and failed to observe that the real work of art is the chief enemy of the cult-image.

CHAPTER VI

THE MIDDLE AGES

A SPECTATOR, passing from the earlier to the later Middle Ages, would have found in the thirteenth century a system of public worship of singular beauty, carried out in Romanesque and Gothic buildings more glorious and more expressive of the religious idea—its Christian intimacy, solemn grandeur, joyous vitality—than any in the previous history of the world. This worship was executed with ornaments of exquisite and unfailing refinement, by ministers whose vestments still retained much of the simple flowing dignity which he would have observed in earlier ages, and with music steadily growing in grandeur and resource. But he would have noticed several marked changes, which were already causing the first stirrings of the revolt that has produced the modern world.

He would have noticed perhaps first of all that the intellectual element had almost disappeared. The strongest appeal of the Church, at least before the Constantinian era, had been to the

intellectual side of those who witnessed its worship ; and in this it had an immense advantage over paganism which made no such appeal whatever. The Jewish Scriptures, in their passion, their righteousness, and their fundamental reasonableness, had a large share in the conversion of the Empire ; to them were added, as time went on, the unapproachable glory of the New Testament writings : these were read aloud during what was always the open part of the service, and explained by constant homilies ; and the danger of monotony was avoided by the singing between the lessons of those Hebrew psalms which brought a new world of poetry and a new sense of the possibilities of religion to the intelligent pagan inquirer. The earlier Liturgy had been "evangelical" as well as "catholic," and intellectual as well as mystical. By the thirteenth century the evangelical element had disappeared. The language was no longer understood except by very educated people ; the ancient ambones or reading-pulpits had fallen into disuse : the Gospel was sung towards the north, the Epistle was sung towards the altar, as Durandus tells us in the thirteenth century—with the characteristic substitution of silliness for sense—in his explanation that the altar signifies Christ, and that S. John Baptist went before the face of the Lord.

To the devout Christian, an even more striking change would have been the loss of communion. The priests indeed communicate more frequently, because frequent and often solitary masses have become general; but the old spectacle of the whole company of people communicating with him has long disappeared, and, when the people do receive, they are now marked off by receiving only in one kind: at the Reformation there was actually a rebellion in the West of England to demand among other things that the people should not communicate more than once a year. The sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist has been distorted and exaggerated out of the original intention of the service. At the same time the magic-notion has crept into the original idea of the consecration, and stories of bleeding hosts are popular. The doctrine of Transubstantiation had been promulgated (in 1215), and the Elevation (though not yet distinguished by much ceremonial) has fixed the idea of consecration to the recital of a short formula and shifted the axis of the service. The Mass, though still an imposing centre of worship, has ceased to be a communion and become a miracle; attendance at it is compulsory, but to the average man it is little more than a pious spectacle, though the idea of sacramental worship was not destined to

be pushed outside the Liturgy altogether by "visits to the Blessed Sacrament" in the tabernacle, and by the service of Benediction, till the period of the Counter-Reformation.

Almost as noticeable to one familiar with the earlier rite would have been the disappearance of the great ceremonies of the Offertory. Once the people had brought their loaves and bottles of wine and other offerings, which were gathered and heaped up by the deacons: now the people who have ceased to make communion have ceased also to offer.

It is not an age of accurate learning, and some parts of the old service have been long forgotten, leaving obscure vestigial traces. For instance, there is a curious hiatus after the Gospel, which still occurs in the Latin rite and is thus described by Dom Cabrol[1]:—"After the Gospel the priest says: *Dominus vobiscum. Oremus.* It is the beginning of the collective prayers; but now this invitation is barren of result. No one prays, the choir sings a psalm (the offertory)."

Worship has become more individual and at the same time more localised, and thus the popular tendency to magic ideas is less restrained. There is a considerable increase in shrines, relics, and images. A great deal of devotion is transferred to

[1] *Le Livre de la Prière antique.* 1900 (Eng. trans. p. 71).

the saints, who have their local areas of supremacy and their periods of fashion, S. Edward the Confessor giving place to S. George, and S. Swithun waning before S. Thomas of Canterbury: in art we see whole groups of figures become popular and disappear; as, for instance, the legendary virgin-martyrs like S. Ursula, who were fortunate in coinciding with the greatest age of painting; or their present-day successors, the four statues, now so indispensable, of the Sacred Heart, the Immaculate Conception, S. Joseph, and S. Anthony of Padua.

With the loss of the original purpose, there was in the later Middle Ages a considerable change in the ceremonial of the Liturgy. There was a decrease of breadth; and the general shrinkage was accompanied by a growing attention to trivial acts, though the rubrics still allowed much comparative freedom and simplicity till the sixteenth century. There was considerable elaboration, for instance, in the use of incense, though again the use was still almost simple compared with that of the Roman ceremonial to-day; the ceremony of the ablution of the chalice at the end of mass was prescribed, now that the doctrine of Christ's presence had become more localised, and then elaborated with formulas and more ceremonies. Acts which had

to be done, and in earlier times had been carried out, as the eminent Roman Catholic authority, Edmund Bishop, said, in the true Roman spirit of sober common-sense—" done in a plain and simple but the most practical manner," [1] were coming to be surrounded by a multitude of little ceremonies which were tedious and often childish; and formulas were drawn up around them, as well as private devotions for the priest at the beginning and end of the service and during his communion—forms which lengthened the ritual and in general lacked the sober, almost Puritanical, simplicity of the Roman rite which had by now established itself (though still with much local freedom) over the Western Church.

The veiling of the altar and of the different parts of the church had of course long since disappeared; and the general aspect of altar and chancel in the thirteenth century was very much what it is to-day in an Anglican cathedral, or well kept ancient parish church, where the stone rood-screen or traceried wooden screen has been preserved. The people in general seem to have attended Mattins and Evensong as well as the Eucharist, though they did not for the most part understand the language. We know what the forms of service were like, from countless missals,

[1] *The Genius of the Roman Rite*, 1899.

books of hours, manuals, processionals, pontificals, which have survived. We can also reconstruct the sumptuous and elaborate ceremonial in almost every detail from such directories as the *Consuetudinary* and the *Customary* of Salisbury Cathedral.[1] As yet there was no enforcement of uniformity, and there were marked differences in different countries and even in different dioceses.

The services of the Eastern Churches were of course completely different from those of the West; they retained, especially in the prominence of the deacon and in the iconostasis which screened off the altar—and indeed in the whole ritual and structure of the Liturgy—a more ancient order. As they have changed but little since, we can still see to-day in any Greek or Russian church what Eastern worship was like during our Gothic period, and indeed a good deal of what it was like when the Emperor Justinian built S. Sophia: the service in that church which converted Vladimir's envoys in the tenth century was certainly more splendid than anything to be seen at the present day. "Nothing else," they reported, "is like it on earth: there in truth God has his dwelling among men. We can never forget the beauty which we saw there. No one

[1] Republished by Dr W. H. Frere in *The Use of Sarum*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1898.

who has once tasted the sweet, will afterwards take what is bitter, nor can we any longer abide in heathenism."

There had indeed been serious loss in the West by the time the thirteenth century was reached; but public worship was very beautiful, and it formed an integral part of the lives of the people, who loved it, supported it, and enshrined it in a wealth of exquisite things that are the despair of our artists to-day. There had been deterioration in the ages of ignorance and barbarism through which the Church had passed, not unheroically, not unsuccessfully; but that worship might have recovered what was lost, and gained what was lacking, might in fact have been reformed. The world was not wise enough; and it had to wait till reform became revolution.

CHAPTER VII

THE REFORMATION

It is difficult for us to imagine the mental framework of that Humanist Movement which we miscall the Renaissance, or of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation which followed it. To men of that, as of preceding ages, the world was static—and a little the worse for wear—interrupted occasionally by revolts and by reactions, and revolts of course had to be suppressed : to us the world of our own moment is the result of an explicable course of development, moving to its next stage. The Humanists harked back to a golden age of Imperial Rome ; the Reformers to the Patriarchs and Prophets, and to the writers of the New Testament—all speaking the very words of God. None found their way back to the wise and tolerant teaching of Jesus. Both looked around at the decaying system of Medievalism and were dissatisfied or violently disgusted according to their temperament. Both were full of certainty and of bright hopes for the future : it would have been inconceivable to the Italians of the fifteenth century, when the Church

provided the most powerful friends of Humanism, that their hopes were to be disappointed and that Spain and the Counter-Reformation were to destroy their freedom and to set up a new ideal of asceticism and rigidity, mingled in seventeenth-century art with an unpleasant flavour of sentimentality and perverted sensualism;[1] it would have been inconceivable to the Reformers that their movement would stop until the whole of Europe had accepted its doctrines. But neither movement really failed: the modern world is the result of both. Only, the modern world seems as far as ever from discovering a religious synthesis. It is partly for this reason that religion cannot now find its expression in art.

If the period which changed the ecclesiastical system of Medievalism had possessed our knowledge of the early Church and that historical sense which the nineteenth century brought into the world, they might have agreed upon some kind of tolerant and gradual reform which would have avoided disaster. They might have recognised that scholasticism had died away in the rediscovery of Greece and Rome, the inauguration of science, the finding of a New World, the break-

[1] See *e.g.* Werner Weisbach, *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation.* Berlin, 1921. The importance of the Counter-Reformation in the creation of new methods and ideals has not been sufficiently realised.

down of the old system. In the matter of public worship—so important because it is the visible presentation of the religious idea—the Reformers might have appreciated the wealth of beauty and devotion in the late Medieval system, and all its deep human possibilities ; the conservatives might have understood that the world, rapidly becoming "modern," required above all things freedom, experiment, variety. Both sides might have recognised the long course of development :—the primitive meal, with reading, explanation, and spiritual exercises, developing into a congregational service ; ceremonial and splendour increasing ; the explanatory lectures developing into the sermon ; the lessons ceasing to be intelligible, and then becoming inaudible ; the rise of a rich and comprehensive system of prayer-exercise in the Breviary ; the hardening and localising of the sacramental idea, the accompanying loss of the idea of Communion ; the growth of popular devotions, of shrines and pilgrimages, of iconolatry. The Reformers might even (we would fain imagine) have discovered that the triumph of art from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries had undermined iconolatry, and that if they could only keep their forces within the older Church the evil might without difficulty be wiped out.

Of course nothing of all this was at that time

possible, which is the reason why so heavy a responsibility lies upon us in an age of fuller opportunities. The conservatives began with the detestable apparatus of persecution. The Reformers could see nothing but superstition and idolatry in the old system: even the moderate Bucer could speak of "the execrated Mass"; while the altars and vestments, which had symbolised the religion of the people from time immemorial, were to eminent scholars and bishops but altars of Baal and trappings of the Scarlet Woman. By both sides real reformation, as we should understand the word, was made impossible; and to-day the problem remains before us, unsolved.

Protestantism failed to reach its goal. Its dreams of converting Europe had passed away almost before the American nations began to exist. To-day, in Germany it has become an antiquated shadow which has almost forgotten that it once aroused heroic enthusiasm; it is almost entirely ignored, and the men who are now attempting a recovery from materialism can find no use for it: in the other Teutonic nations it survives as a custom rather than a national religion: among the Latin nations (which provided the earliest Reformers) it makes no converts, and continues to lose hold upon the young, though the conditions of Latin religion seem to cry out

for reform. Among the English-speaking peoples which were actively Protestant fifty years ago, there is to-day a growing silence about the old Protestant issues, and a considerable drift towards new and much vaguer embodiments of religion; while Roman Catholicism seems (to those who do not study statistics) to be growing, because its adherents decrease less rapidly than those of definite Protestantism, and it therefore becomes relatively stronger.

In Britain and America indeed, and in the mission-field, there is a more promising sign—a prospect perhaps of a Christian movement, which may one day combine with the Eastern Churches to give the world an acceptable form of religion; but that movement will be Catholic, in the real sense of a word that is pitifully misused—it will not be Protestant in any sense that our forefathers would have allowed. It is, so far, rather a movement of thought than a presentment of religion, a fellowship among the younger educated generation, with no form as yet and no banner—nothing as yet which the plain man can recognise, nothing round which the people can rally. It has indeed so far developed no well-understood expression in public worship; and unless it does so express itself, it will be lost and forgotten.[1]

[1] See p. 171.

Protestantism has broken down, partly because the modern world no longer needs its somewhat violent protection, being no longer afraid of Rome (the newspapers nowadays make *tabu* of all Protestant remarks, and are particularly courteous to the Vatican); partly because its leading doctrines about the Bible, the Atonement, and so forth no longer command the acceptance of theologians, while some of its forms, like that of Calvin, are even more repellent to modern thought than Papal Infallibility itself; partly, and most of all, because its services have come to seem dreary. People attend the worship of Protestantism in ever decreasing numbers; and no religious body can retain much vitality if its adherents do not come together regularly in its services.

The Church of Rome has long secured the attendance at Mass of such as remain faithful, by the simple expedient of promising eternal damnation to those who absent themselves. Protestantism has no such weapon at its disposal: it can only in a vague way characterise as sinners those who do not go to church on Sundays; but such conviction of sin has nearly disappeared, and Protestantism is therefore thrown back on the inherent attractiveness of its services.

But here Protestantism is weakest of all.

The Mass, for all its deterioration, was in the

sixteenth century, as it still is, a wonderful and much loved service; it had developed with the help of much intuitive psychology, it was adorned with singular beauty, and consecrated by the devotion of many generations. To-day it has to the liturgical eye deteriorated even further; but that deterioration has brought a great practical gain, and once more set Protestantism at a disadvantage: in an age of counter-attractions, when everyone is in a hurry, and Sunday is a day of pleasure which the great majority of people wish to keep as clear as possible of duties, Protestantism has no short service to offer, and if there were such a service there would still be no tradition which impelled people—as there would be no law which compelled them—to attend it. Low Mass, without communicants, represents a grave theological deterioration, and in its absence of music and assistant ministers, its curtailed and distorted ceremonial, is eloquent of liturgical and æsthetic loss; in Benediction, Christian worship has moved from the Upper Chamber to some region where the worship of God, as most thoughtful people understand it, is almost lost; but both services have one enormous advantage: they are extremely short. Moreover they are services of action.[1]

[1] See p. 246.

Now the Reformers lived in an age when Benediction had not been invented and when the Mass had not yet passed into what seems to be its final stage: the Mass had indeed even then little intellectual appeal to the multitude; it was not the great service which it once had been, there had gathered round it much of that superstition to which the Reformers objected; but it drew out a vast wealth of devotion, the tradition of it was in the very blood of the people, and it might have been reformed. Some did indeed try to reform it; but the general policy was to abuse it, or at best to "turn it into a communion" with much violence. No one realised how difficult this was.

In the first place, there was the European tradition of a thousand years to reckon with: the religious habits of the masses are not easy to destroy, but it is very much easier to get them to mock at the Mass than to change it into a communion. The people never came back to the practice of weekly reception; and Protestants on the whole have probably communicated less frequently than Roman Catholics.

Nor did the Reformers ever come near to restoring the Lord's Supper, the primitive eucharistic feast. That is probably impossible; we could only restore its principles and its spirit:

we could not unite its features in one service; but we might have Christian convivial suppers in church—something better than church ales, or parish teas, or Methodist love-feasts—and (but probably at some other time) a beautiful but not elaborate communion service, something like that of the English Prayer Book if it is ever revised with sufficient thoroughness, and properly carried out. Besides this, if we wished to recover the worship of the Apostolic Church, we should have to be much more interested in spiritual healing and in other matters now resting under the cold light of psychic research. But such things would come only as the result of natural development; for you cannot suddenly change men's religious habits, nor can you easily invent a new thing and make a fresh start from that beginning. The Reformers forgot that they had in popular traditions something of enormous value, which could be partly destroyed or gradually weakened, but which could not in hundreds of years be recreated. They gave their followers a new communion service, austere, unbeautiful, which depended for its solemnity and its power on the temper of those who were present. It was fit for saints and heroes, but saints and heroes would make anything fit: to the common man it was literally awful and literally forbidding; to the

young, as one generation has succeeded another, it has proved chill and repellent. The devout found their highest moments in it, but it was never the favourite service even among church-members, and the ordinary man said, "I am not good enough." It had none of the winsomeness of the Mass.

The Sermon became the central feature of Sunday worship, and has been called (not always in irony) the Protestant sacrament. Again, this was not really a revival of primitive custom, in which the sermons had been explanations, given by different persons, of the passages read in the Liturgy, but a continuance of the Medieval oration by an isolated individual. At first the sermon succeeded: men were quite sure that they had found the key of public worship, something that would prove irresistible in its attraction and all-powerful in its effects. They thought that most ministers would preach quite well. During the seventeenth century this pathetic optimism was not seriously falsified; the majority perhaps of able and learned men entered the ministry; religion was the burning subject of the age, was in fact politics; sermons were orations about questions of public controversy, and were often very exciting. Before the seventeenth century closed, it had began to dawn on men that

eloquence, learning, and piety are not so generally combined as had been supposed, and that in fact there were not sufficient fountains of inspired rhetoric to go round: the average sermon was the product of the average man, whose deficiencies might have escaped notice so long as he had only to read a service, as in the Middle Ages. In more recent times the press has stepped in to do much of the work of the Jacobean pulpit, fewer men of first-class intellect have entered the ministry, and the sermon has settled down into an institution. Church-goers will not generally go to church unless there is a sermon, and do not generally like the sermon when they get there—and most people do not go to church at all. College authorities still seem to believe that by some miracle the next generation of ministerial neophytes will preach better than the last, whereas in reality, because the supply is not what it was, they will preach worse. Everybody, except the Christian Scientists, finds it difficult to acknowledge that really good sermons can only be preached every week by a small minority of persons, and that to make the sermon the centre of public worship is a psychological mistake as well as a theological blunder. The sermon should have been an occasional inspiration and delight. As a necessary routine it has failed, and must fail for ages to

come—save, perhaps, among the exceptionally well-educated ministers of Scotland; and the worst of it is that the sermon has destroyed the other motives for going to church—those of the first century, for instance. The cuckoo has turned the other birds out of the nest, and now he cannot sing.

The Reformation has tried to substitute the art of rhetoric for all the other arts of the Church. This at least is true of Protestantism in the main from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The Reformers themselves were fortunately never consistent in their opposition to beauty: Luther was a musician, a poet, and the creator of German prose, Calvin included art in his system; Protestantism produced in Rembrandt the one great religious painter since Tintoret and El Greco, and in painting Holland took the leadership from Italy; Protestantism developed a music of its own, and has had the major share in that vast development of music which is the great artistic achievement of the modern era; reformed England became almost at once supreme in poetry, and produced in the English Bible the greatest prose work in the greatest literature of the world. In some directions, therefore, and those the most important of all, the Reformation produced or contributed to the greatest of artistic achievements. Yet, on the other hand, and quite

illogically, the Reformers set themselves against art in some of its most important forms and uses, so that Protestantism, when the revival of poetry and beauty came in the nineteenth century, was commonly recognised as the enemy.

There had been indeed a wave of puritanism over the whole of Western Christendom: the Roundheads seem almost jovial by the side of the asceticism of the Counter-Reformation; priests and ministers alike had gone into mourning, and for the first time in history were distinguished by their black attire; Catholic ornament became increasingly gloomy amid its glitter, and church pictures increasingly preoccupied with the Passion, and with death or martyrdom in its most revolting forms; both wings of the religious world looked askance at the actor and the dancer. Because of all this, the world of art and literature found no consistent philosophy of life in which to dwell, and formed standards of its own apart from religion.

But Catholic forms of worship, through their very conservatism, retained much of the old gay beauty, which had been carried on from the robust popular spirit of the Middle Ages to the joy of life which Humanism had so magnificently proclaimed. Protestantism on the other hand, in its determination to break with the old system, had rejected the accumulated traditions

of beauty in church services, setting up something which was cold and bare, which missed the popular appeal (for the people had at first to be dragged along by the superior persons—the highbrows) and had no experience of human psychology behind it. Worst of all, the Reformers in Britain and some other countries broke out into vulgar and hateful destruction of beautiful things —from great and glorious buildings to the humblest articles of metal or wood. The iconoclasts of the eighth century had at least been logical, they had confined themselves to the destruction of images; the voracious aristocrats and the ignorant *roturiers* of the Edwardian and the Roundhead iconoclasms in England, like their comrades elsewhere, destroyed everything that was beautiful—especially everything that could be melted down and appropriated. An unexampled treasure of painting and sculpture, of plate, wood-work, and stained glass was destroyed. Every church in the country had become by the end of the Commonwealth the mere shadow of its former glory; and remained a beautiful relic, till the ecclesiastical restorers of the Catholic revival put the final seal of degradation upon it, and made recovery for ever impossible.

Thus did Protestantism, for no principle of religion or philosophy, but in the wanton stupidity

of sheer reaction, put itself wrong, and establish a debt to humanity which it had sooner or later to pay.

It is paying now. In the end every civilisation and every religion is judged by its art, whether we dig up its relics in the sand or find it still surviving in our midst :—and rightly, for art is the deepest and most universal of all languages ; unconsciously, and without any means of sophistry or subterfuge, it proclaims itself for what it is and lays bare the philosophy of its being. And if, for all its heroism, piety, brilliance, and strength, Protestantism has failed to bring Christendom to a new birth and is itself dwindling in power to-day, while we lament the loss of so great a virtue to the world, we must look with clear eyes for the cause. And the cause is this : Protestantism was dominated by reaction and became the victim of its own violence ; it never came really to grips with human nature, it never acquired a consistent philosophy of life, and it has described itself in its art for all men to see. Thus it cannot make way even against a system so intellectually jejune, and so ethically defective as the Ultramontane Catholicism of to-day. Protestantism had the makings of a conquering intellectual movement, it is still the greatest moral force in the world ; but it has no form. It is still inestimably precious because

it stands for liberty, and if sensible men ever have to range themselves again in religious camps, they will have to be Protestant rather than Catholic, because liberty is the most practically important quality of all. But they do not so range themselves—the banners are too dingy; and they remain outside, to divert their religious enthusiasm into other causes or to dissipate it altogether. To the average modern observer, Catholicism means a glimpse of worship which for all its faults has a touch of glory, though he cannot believe in it; while Protestantism is something that he ran away from in his youth. This in Britain: on the Continent it is something that he has never dreamt of investigating at all. So no one is grateful to Protestantism for all that it has accomplished. It may have created the British Empire and the United States of America, but it has left no monument like S. Sophia, or the cathedrals of Durham, Salisbury, or Amiens: every other great movement has its characteristic expression, even Islam has its arabesques, but Protestantism labours under the perpetual disadvantage of having destroyed without creating.

If a new and mighty movement is ever to come for the regeneration of Christendom, it will surely have a spirit that will sweep into itself all that is best in the opposing forms of Christianity—

breaking perhaps with neither, and while it carries on the work of reform which Protestantism has begun, it will respond to the deep needs of humanity and make manifest to the world the beauty which men desire.

The English came nearest the solution in the Reformation Period; and I think it is the English-speaking peoples who will lead the way, if the problem is ever to be solved and we are to avoid the break-up of institutional religion in the near future; because they have a deep-rooted sense of fairness, a tolerant and inquiring disposition, and a real desire to do the right thing. The English Reformers—those, that is, who gave us the Book of Common Prayer—fought hard to retain all that they found good in the Medieval system, both in its services and their ceremonies: indeed the Church of England has always puzzled Continental observers because, with the national common sense, she endeavoured to pursue a middle way, preserving what was precious in the Medieval system while accepting the principles of the Reformation. She kept reiterating her principles with a fidelity that has continued to the present day—the Scriptures, the pure word of the Gospel, the Primitive Church, the godly and ancient Fathers, the inheritance of later gifts whose abuse does not take away the use thereof.

But she has never achieved a more than partial success, partly because she was nurtured by an Act of Uniformity, accepted the divine right of kings, and never quite won her way to the people; partly because there have generally been enough Englishmen without the traditional quality to impair her vitality by the ferment of Geneva or of Rome. If she can recover the loyalty of her members she may yet save institutional religion from the coming catastrophe; but she was profoundly weakened by the loss of those elements which went to form Nonconformity, just as the Medieval Church had been weakened by the loss of those virile races which became Protestant.

Disintegration continues, both among the Latin races and in the rest of Christendom, though in different and in increasingly non-ecclesiastical forms: it is perhaps always due not so much to the separatist tendencies of the dissidents as to the refusal of the original bodies to comprehend —in both senses of that verb. Perhaps, when the older Churches see that denudation is about to change into a more rapid form of destruction, they will reconsider their position in the light of the Gospel, and change their methods. They could, I believe, recover, and help to form a united Christendom as the nucleus of a uniting world, if they would transform their *leges credendi*

into a *lex orandi*, and in the simple love of God devote their energies to the service of man. Not the least service they could render would be provision, all over the world, of public worship that would draw men to it, and to one another, by its beauty and its truth. That has still to be done. The prime object of the Church should be to convert the world by its goodness, to teach the world through its love of truth, and to provide for the common worship of the world by its mastery of all beautiful ways.

Meanwhile the love of truth and goodness is most marked in the Protestant and Anglican sections of Christendom. Our advances in the discovery of truth have not come from the more ancient Churches: it is to the English-speaking peoples, and not to France, Italy, or Spain, that the world looks most hopefully for moral leadership. Since the War, we have all noticed how in Great Britain and America, where the old Protestant spirit lies deep in the traditions of the people, there is a real love of justice and mercy, a wide-spread desire to be honest about finance (which is to serve God rather than Mammon), a willingness to do the Christian thing—a spirit which influences statesmen and to which statesmen can appeal with success. In the treatment of the defeated enemy in 1923, I have never heard any

moral principles invoked on the Continent, but only self-interest. In this country we have at least got as far as the principle that one should not kick a man when he is down—and farther than that. As one year has succeeded another, it has been burnt into our minds that the one hope for civilisation is for the peoples of the world to apply the principles of Christ to international affairs, and that the English-speaking peoples are almost alone among the great Powers in being ready to make a beginning. I do not think there is much pride in this discovery; there is indeed some self-depreciation: but it is being forced upon us that we have got to take the lead because our people have a conviction that it is their duty—however much they have failed, and may still fail—to follow the Christian ideal.

Is not this true, and have we not been driven, step by step and against our will, bitterly to acknowledge that the hope of the world has been taken from it, because of a huge moral failure? If this be so, let us remember that to love God and to love one's neighbour as oneself is more than all holocausts and sacrifices, that to do good is pure religion and undefiled, and that all methods of services take a lower place before the moral activity which is the chief service of God. If we judge the Reformation by its fruits, it has not

altogether failed. It has been incomplete, one-sided, mistaken in many things ; but it has raised the moral level of mankind. May the Reformed Churches not recover from the confusion which besets not them alone but all the world to-day ?

I have suggested that a real reformation was impossible in the past, and that to-day the problem remains unsolved before us. Upon its solution depends, more, I think, than upon anything else, the future of Christendom. The ethics of Jesus, indeed, and the love which he evokes in the heart of man, will never disappear out of the world ; but if Christianity is to escape becoming a mere private opinion, and if the world is ever to unite in a great common religion, that religion will have to express itself in forms of worship which are free from all taint of unworthy ideas and which mankind can recognise as being both beautiful and true.

The work has still to be done, because Protestantism as a system has broken down, and its ideals are passing away from the first generation of the twentieth century. Protestantism has broken down, not because it was wanting in great ideas or great men, but because it never developed a technique.

CHAPTER VIII

THE "FREE CHURCH" STANDPOINT

PROTESTANTISM in Great Britain and America has been rapidly developing into something which has taken the less negative and more hopeful name of Free Church. If we ignore the more conservative and less educated elements as destined to pass away, we find a large and growing body, mainly of younger folk, who form perhaps more than half of the Student Movement, and are already supplying much of the inspiration and directive power to the Protestant Communions all over the world. With them also are of course many Anglicans of the Liberal Evangelical School, to whom the word Catholic is not unwelcome, and in the vast international Student Movement they are associated in a very real fellowship with many Catholics of the Anglican and Eastern Churches, with some Roman Catholics, with many Christian students in Asia, and others who are not yet Christians in name. There is thus a new orientation making itself felt among those who stand for the future in Christendom: it is

against all negation and opposition, and stands for the principle that each shall be loyal to his own religious Communion and shall endeavour to bring the positive virtues of that Communion as a contribution to the whole. It is synthetic, and therefore charitable; its members no longer exert themselves to prove that their Church is right, and all other Churches wrong; and therefore it is creative. It can indeed be called Catholic, in the real sense of that word and without qualifying epithets. The only hope, so far at least as I can see, for the survival and recovery of institutional religion lies in this movement of our own age. Within it are two main strands of tradition and thought—that which is Catholic in the broad traditional sense, but which, to avoid a lamentable confusion of terms, we will call *Ecclesiastical*; and that to which is given by its own adherents the convenient and expressive name of *Free Church*. That term, to be at all accurate, must be taken away from all connection with the idea of state-establishment, and even then many very ecclesiastically-minded Anglicans would say that they find themselves in practice freer than Free Churchmen; but, after a thousand years of confusion, we cannot expect to find a definite terminology: so we will call our two ways of thought about public worship " Free

Church" and "Ecclesiastical," taking them in this order.

If we desire to be positive, charitable, constructive, we must criticise freely at times, as I have tried to do with some frankness in the last chapter; for it is not paradoxical to say that the more we try to understand and appreciate all sides, the more we shall find something on all sides to criticise. Disunion brings with it exaggeration and distortion; any real movement towards reunion must bring with it the removal of exaggerations, which grew up because one section had not the advantage of the modifying influence which was contained in others. This is why reunion can never come so long as Romans call upon Anglicans to join them by submission, or Anglicans upon Free Churchmen. The persons called upon to surrender will reply: "By our separation you have become a sect as well as we. If our ideas and practices are distorted, so are yours." This is not due to mere combative instinct: it is due above all to an instinct for truth; and the persons called upon will be ready to add: "While we claim that our Church has special excellences, so, we are willing to admit, has yours." From this it is not a far step to say: "Let us therefore each make our contribution to the common stock, and each learn from one

another." If we try to contribute and to learn, we must criticise. But we shall not nag. That is what has been wrong in the past : we have been always finding fault with one another, always making out our case. But now we feel free to criticise, frankly though infrequently, because we criticise (as we appreciate) all sides, and the strongest criticism we reserve for the side we know best, and love best—though it must be admitted that the English carry sometimes too far the principle of chastening what they love.

But in this book we can leave for a while our unpleasant task of criticism, and endeavour now to describe the positive contributions of the "Free" and the "Ecclesiastical" sides. If the attempt is to succeed, which is now being made in the world, to bring the positive contributions of all the Churches into one common heritage, it will have to encounter many difficulties in the realms of doctrine and organisation, but will have an easier task in that of prayer and worship. It will be here that success is first attained, for it is here that men are nearest to God : it is in worship too that prejudice is more easily convicted, variety more readily allowed, individualism more widely acknowledged, and fellowship more deeply enjoyed ; for in worship men are nearest to one another because they are nearest to God.

I am not qualified by experience to set forth the Free Church point of view or to do justice to its contribution in worship, but I have attended many conferences with Mr. Malcolm Spencer and others who have taught me to understand a little from both sides; and I think I can give here the main points which our joint committee reported.

First of all they would say, I think, that the Protestant Churches discovered something valuable and effective, something which was new to the world and was at the same time the recovery of a precious element in New Testament Christianity that had been almost entirely forgotten. The Reformers tried to get behind the traditional abuses, and to be scriptural; they succeeded, they produced types of character, virile and devout, which regenerated society in Protestant countries, and gave those countries a leadership in the world which on the whole has not been misused.

For this they needed freedom. They fought for religious freedom and for political freedom too, not with invariable consistency; but they have won the right of religious minorities in every civilised country to be free, so that all can worship God in their own way. Without this freedom, no profound reform and no final recovery of Christendom would be possible.

This freedom has produced variety, and variety is a good thing—is indeed the only ultimate hope for organised religion. Uniformity proved impossible as soon as the modern world, the world of experimental science, began; and in these days of specialised minds the Church has no choice except to admit the widest possible variety or to shrink into a sect. The different types of men will in all human probability diverge yet more; but in any case they exist: to some, the intellectual element in worship is all important, to others the emotional, to others the element of service; to some, externals are essential, to others they are a hindrance; to some, set speech is a hindrance, others cannot endure extemporary prayer, others find silence more helpful than speech.

Therefore, especially at the present day, experiment is needed, and freedom has made experiment possible. The ordinary Free Church worship may not be what is wanted by most people to-day; but the Protestants of the past produced what they deemed necessary—their worship helped them to live nearer to God, it expressed their highest ideals and enabled them to convert many multitudes—and the Free Church minister of to-day, because of his freedom, is able (if he can carry his people with him) to draw upon every method

in the world, even (as some Free Catholics have shown, following a section of the so-called Ritualist movement in the Church of England) to introduce the methods of Rome, thereby vindicating in the fullest way their Protestantism by the exercise of private judgment: the Free Churchman has indeed at his disposal all the ritual, ceremonial, and music of the world, if he chooses to use it, and, if he had sufficient judgment in this very difficult matter, would be able to produce the finest type of service in Christendom.

That may happen in the future, because experiment is the master-key; but so far he has preferred the method of extemporary prayer and the sermon. He has done this because he desires to present religion fresh and true to the generation around him; he wishes to include the urgencies of the moment in the Sunday worship, to pray for missionaries, the League of Nations, and social reform, for instance, and not to behave as if his congregation belonged to the Holy Roman Empire or to Elizabethan England. He is able to centre the worship of a whole Sunday round a particular aspect of Christian truth; he can prevent dogmas from dwindling into mere abstractions, he can (though all these things are difficult) prevent the divorce of religion from life. The importance of the sermon strengthens

this element of living presentation, as does also the importance of the congregation, who, though they limit his range of experiment, do by their very real democracy give his words a representative and corporate power. Indeed our advocate for Free Church methods would claim that he, like the Catholic, uses symbols, but that his symbols are living things, powerful in their august isolation —the sermon which is the lifting up of the Saviour, the congregation which is the concentration of the Spirit.

These two symbols form the most powerful appeal to those outside; and the Free Church motive is predominantly evangelistic. How strong is the tendency is illustrated by the spontaneous rise of the Salvation Army, a body formed for evangelism alone, and rich in good works. Protestantism had revived the tradition of S. Francis, which had been forgotten for three centuries; the Jesuits taught their Church to follow the example, and all the Churches have now evangelism to their credit; but to the Free Churches it is the breath of life—if they ceased to be missionaries, they would die.

One community stands apart, the Society of Friends. They have avoided the dangers of the sermon and the defects of ministerial prayer-composition. Their very existence shows that the

problems of Christianity cannot be summed up in the words Catholic and Protestant: they are indeed immune from the criticisms which can be directed against other Christians—curiously enough even the artist has nothing to say against them (except that they have given up their costume), since, having taken refuge in extreme simplicity, they offend against no canons of art, and what they have is good. The difficulty is that they are a guild rather than a Church, and thus do not help us much when we are thinking in terms of Church organisation; but if institutional Christianity does miss its chance to-day and disappears, the world may find that God has prepared the Quakers to be the rallying point of a new Church. Their great contribution is that they have stood for that receptive and co-operative prayer, which we said in an earlier chapter is the prayer of Christ; they have opened themselves in the silence wholly to the Spirit of God, they have recovered, though on a small scale, the fellowship of the Primitive Church, as they have followed that Church in devotion to the Holy Spirit. They are not the Church, and have not had to bear the Church's overwhelming burden; but they have, for that very reason perhaps, succeeded where we have failed, are nearer to the example of Christ than we are, and at this

moment are showing what Christianity is, to a Europe in despair.

Also there are millions of unattached Christians (some of the best are among them) and new religious bodies, like the Christian Scientists, and Theosophists becoming more Christian, whose influence and methods we cannot estimate as yet.

All Free Church methods, from those of the orthodox to the latest and least orthodox developments, have certain ideas in common :—that the higher the type of worship, the less importance is attached to external matters ; that emphasis on officials, on place and time—the local and physical —degrades the idea of God ; that the worthiest worship is that which is richest in ethical content, and extends beyond mere adoration to righteousness of life and the active furtherance of God's purpose in the world. Therefore the Free Church principle is close to the New Testament. In the Old, there are two types of worship : the Priestly, which is communal and propitiatory ; the Prophetic, which is individual and demands righteousness. In the New Testament, the Priestly type is spiritualised in the Epistle to the Hebrews ; the Prophetic abounds elsewhere, is indifferent to rite and ecclesiastical status, and concentrates on preaching, conversion, and holiness. Jesus was a prophet, and never called

himself a priest; his one sacrifice made all other sacrifice superfluous; he lives again in the man who is spiritually renewed, and here are the only perfect conditions of worship.

If the Free Churchman allows a place for the Priestly element in worship, he would at the same time add:—that historically the Priestly element has tended to quench the Prophetic; that the highest worship has been produced apart from ritualistic methods; that the moral and missionary fruits of Christianity have come more through the Prophetic than the Priestly type of worship. Many would add further that the two types should be kept apart, since the evangelical element would only be obscured by borrowings from the sacerdotal side: especially that the Lord's Supper should be maintained as "a family gathering of the redeemed, a feast of love, with Christ present in the spirit," and not as a "vicarious or repeated offering of a sacrifice on behalf of all humanity with Christ actually present in the wafer." Others would hope for a reconciliation between these views; but there are among the younger men many who, while desiring an æsthetic improvement, would still maintain that the sermon and not the eucharistic sacrifice is the central act of worship, because the Christian religion seeks the reconciliation of man and not the reconciliation

of God. Free Church worship, they would add, is all the better for making greater demands on the spiritual personality of the presiding minister. There is surely much in all this point of view which the ecclesiastically minded would do well to take to heart, much that must be incorporated in any worship that is to deserve the great name of Catholic.

But behind all the varieties of Christian worship that claim to be "free" there lies one great theological principle. It is this. Public worship by itself is not religion; it is only a part of a much larger whole. The real worship of God is the devotion of life in its entirety. It is not a matter of time or place, but they that worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth, and they are known by their fruits. God is not such as to be satisfied with prayers however long, with sermons however eloquent, with rites however pure, with ceremonies however beautiful, but with the love of a life. That is surely true, and the core of our Lord's teaching. Corporate worship remains an essential part, not to be left undone because the other is done: it is essential because fellowship is necessary to religion as to the other human activities; men bring their individual daily experience, especially in the more informal types of service, to be corrected and

expanded in the group, and the common expression of the group is a testimony and an appeal to those without. But the whole to which it belongs is the life centred in God, organised round God, obedient to him, transformed by him, and so revealing as a light to the world the beauty of his holiness.

CHAPTER IX

THE "ECCLESIASTICAL" STANDPOINT

We have agreed, as I assume, to use the word "Ecclesiastical" in describing those more fixed and sacramental ways of public worship which are common to the Roman and Eastern Orthodox Churches together with the Anglican Communion and the ancient separated Churches of the East. We are avoiding the word "Catholic" in this connection, because that word is properly used in a philosophical or theological sense and is not rightly applied to a system of worship. The popular misuse of "Catholic" as if it meant vestments and incense does unaccountable harm; and a man may be Catholic, he may even be "a Catholic," while remaining Puritan in his worship: indeed some of the strongest Puritans of old days have been also the most rigid Catholics; and I suppose the Church of Rome itself would be rejoiced to include the whole system of orthodox Protestantism, and leave Protestants to worship in their own way, if they would only accept the infallibility of the Pope. Although the worship

of the Eastern, Roman, and Anglican Churches—especially that of the East—can be traced back in recognisable form to the end of the second century, it might be radically changed without ceasing to fit the Catholic theology of the Church, so long as it included baptism and the supper of the Lord.

Moreover, the phrase "Catholic worship" is often used as if it implied some recognisable type, or even some kind of uniformity, or even some measure of approximation to the Roman services, which happen to be more familiar to us in the West—though as a matter of fact the Roman Church accepts the Eastern services of the Uniate Churches, and exhibits them with justifiable pride in the ancient churches of Rome itself. The Eastern service-books are more unlike those of Rome than is the Book of Common Prayer, and it would be more difficult to hold a Free Church service in Eastern than in Roman churches: the East differs not only in architecture, ornaments, music, and ceremonial, but in the very structure, position, and proportion of its services, as well as in its private devotions: a day of church-going in Moscow is as distinct an experience as a day of church-going in Milan or in Manchester. As a matter of fact, though the Vatican has for many centuries worked for

uniformity, it has never entirely succeeded, and in the history of the Church the attempt at uniformity has been a sign of division: before the Schism of East and West, the widest divergences were taken for granted, and before the Schism of West and North-West at the Reformation, considerable local differences existed all over Europe in service-books, saints'-day observances, and ceremonial: to take one minor illustration which would have struck the observer, the colour-sequences differed in different cathedrals and other churches—he would have found Easter white at Salisbury and red at Wells, or Michaelmas white at Salisbury, blue at Westminster, and red at York. Diversity in worship has been a sign of organic unity; divided Churches can enforce uniformity within their own borders, but if their rulers were responsible for the whole Church they would accept diversity. Uniformity is uncatholic.

It follows therefore that what is called Catholic worship is merely a sign that the Church is not in effect Catholic, for a Church that was united and universal would not have one particular form of worship, but many different forms: this was the case when the Church was still united before the eleventh century, and it will be much more so if the Church is ever united again.

Therefore the "Catholic" and the "Free

Churchman" (who sometimes sets the Catholic an example in Catholicism when Catholics become too sectarian) have really no quarrel about the main principle of public worship. It should not be a matter of controversy at all. Even a Roman Catholic would protest when he read the defence of the Free Church standpoint in our last chapter, that he too enjoyed the privileges of variety, in spite of the somewhat rigid uniformity which is perhaps a retarded inheritance from Imperial Rome. He has opportunities for extemporary prayer and for free services; though he is obliged to attend Mass, he is not obliged to follow the service, but can use any devotions to which his Church does not object; he can communicate less frequently than the conforming Protestant, or he can communicate every day; he can attend the choir-services or not, as he pleases; he need never hear sermons; he can have mission-services and prayer-meetings or eucharistic devotions and benedictions, intercessions, services of the rosary or the stations of the cross, litanies, processions; he can take part in the ancient ceremonies for Holy Week or in the latest popular devotion; he can worship with his confraternity in church or follow the angelus in the fields; and he has the constant privilege of passing through the open door and offering his private prayers

within the quiet walls where others kneel and worship—multitudes passing every day in and out of the holy places which are a home to them, as they were to their fathers and forefathers.

Every Catholic, whether Roman, Eastern, or Anglican, and everyone who takes the Ecclesiastical standpoint, will surely claim also that his variety is far wider than that of the Free Churchman, because it includes the splendour of ceremonial. A variety, he will say, which at least up to the present has excluded some of the most important forms of art, is variety within a very narrow range; it is singularly unlike the *Benedicite* of Nature, and the very opposite of that inexhaustible beauty within a system of order which God has given us in his creation. How brilliant is our freedom, he might say, how drab is yours! We will grant you that splendour in ceremonial should not be the normal method of worship; but are there not occasions when all mankind feels the need of it? and in the quiet worship of the ordinary Sunday, is there any logical reason for the exclusion of so many arts? We include, and you have excluded, he might add, that craving for beauty which is a universal human instinct, and which the Creator satisfies in all his works.

For symbolism also the Ecclesiastical method has found ample room; and without symbolism

religion is deprived of her highest form of speech, because all attempts at literal expression are inadequate and gross. The need of even violent symbolism has been displayed by Evangelicals in their use of the word "blood"; but without the free use of the decorative arts how clumsy and misleading symbolism becomes, how easily poetry drifts into prose, till even a true poet can write of a fountain that is "drawn from Emmanuel's veins"! True, there is crude and clumsy symbolism on both sides—has not modern pietism produced the statue of the Sacred Heart? true, that ever since the Middle Ages there have been foolish meanings given in the name of symbolism to actions or garments whose real meaning is that of history and common sense: it none the less remains certain both that religion, if it is to be more than private opinion, needs for its subtle truth of expression a wide-spread use of symbolism, and that art also is closely bound up with symbol, painting not less than the more conventional arts, because it can never represent but only suggest the subject in hand.

We claim then a point here also, the Ecclesiastical advocate would say; and in the matter of Christian worship we claim more. We have not only popular devotions but we have also your typical routine services in a fuller and less

imperfect form : indeed the normal Sunday service which with you takes the place of the Eucharist is but a simplified modification of the ancient choir services—those services where the intellectual element is more concentrated, and used in the rarer air of meditation : the Church has for some fifteen or sixteen centuries recognised the value of Scripture reading, combined with the singing of psalms and hymns, and with prayer, just as she has recognised the value of preaching—wisely realising at the same time the limitations of this last element. Even the free and untrammelled character of your services, their adaptability to the needs of the moment, was forestalled about a thousand years ago when the Prone or Bidding of Prayer from the pulpit began—and continued in this country from Anglo-Saxon times to the Reformation. We have therefore no quarrel with the Free Church service : it is at its best an excellent combination of three Medieval elements—the Breviary, the Bidding, and the Sermon. Moreover, all Anglicans would admit that they have something to learn, because their own admirable simplification of the Breviary is too stereotyped in practice, even now ; and they would admit too that Free Churchmen give more care to reading and to preaching, while they would claim to set a better example in

the musical and ceremonial parts of the service, and to possess a ritual so lovely that its prayers are like the chiming of bells across a meadow.

It is obvious that in the Lord's Supper the followers of the Ecclesiastical method would claim to have the advantage. Putting aside the unfortunate ideas about validity or monopoly, they would claim that they understand the service better, love it more, and have made it more successful. If this has led to abuses, they might argue with the utmost reason that the establishment of the Lord's Supper as the great popular service of the Church, understood by the common people according to their lights, and much loved, was an immense work which in its very success brought exaggerations and inevitable superstitions. I am of course assuming ideally reasonable defenders of the Ecclesiastical standpoint, just as I put the Free Church apology into hands that would be often hardly recognised in the Ebenezers of extreme Protestantism. I am not concerned here to find a spokesman for the peculiarities of Romanism or of Anglicanism: educated Roman Catholics would make some admissions, and Anglicans are a reasonable set of beings who have carried self-depreciation to a vice: but there is a position common to all forms of Catholicism, Eastern and Western, to

many Presbyterians, to all " Catholic " schools of thought in the Anglican Communion, and to a vast number of sober laymen, which we are calling Ecclesiastical. It is the position in which, as I think, Christendom would be to-day united, if it had not in the sixteenth century split upon the rock of modern thought. It is obvious therefore that I think the increase of those who take this position is one of the main hopes of Christendom. Perhaps it is because I am an Anglican that I think so, for it is the position of Anglicanism; but I think I am actuated by reason when I say that the Anglican spirit is the one possible cure for the exaggerations in Christendom. At least from this mediating point of view it is possible to defend the Catholic tradition of the Eucharist common to East and West alike, without having to make a case for the theologies and philosophies which slowly gathered about it in the Dark Ages, for the abuses of it, and for those peculiar misuses from which the Eastern like the Anglican Churches have kept free. Those Catholics who are not content with this position have their own case, though I do not think it commends itself to the educated world of to-day; those who do hold this position can, I think, justly maintain that in eucharistic worship they are truer to the spirit of Christianity than the Free

Churchman and perhaps even a little nearer to the essential content of Christ's teaching. They have preserved the receptive and contemplative elements which, as we saw in our first two chapters, are so evangelical, they have kept the notes of joyful adoration and of self-offering in union with the self-offering of Christ, and combined these in the Eucharist with a big human spirit of universality.

The rest of the Ecclesiastical standpoint is well understood and can be briefly stated. The necessary church services are of fixed structure, governed by rules, and consisting of the repetition of words already printed and familiar. There is loss here, but every adherent of the Ecclesiastical services believes that the gain outbalances the loss. Here is a clear issue and perhaps the main issue; but as I have said, there is no cause here for disunion: in Britain and America at least the Ecclesiastical and the Free types are increasingly borrowing from one another, and both can be combined. But the gain of the fixed element is considerable, and goes very deep. It not only saves the worshipper from being at the mercy of the limitations or idiosyncrasies of the minister, but it also saves him from his own idiosyncrasies, militating against his own egotism, lifting him out of his moods, broadening his thought to the

aspirations of the whole Church. It is a permanent safeguard against the omission of essential aspects of Christian prayer and of the Christian message—a strong preservative of catholicity; without it, religion becomes inevitably sectarian, since only exceptional men have power to preserve the breadth and balance of that religion which is so much too broad even for the broadest of men. And the fixed services keep us in contact not only with many aspects of the truth, with all the aspects of worship—penitence, praise, reception, action, contemplation, joy, thanksgiving—but also with great minds belonging to many different times and regions, from ancient Jews to modern divines; and furthermore they are expressed at least in our English services in literature of the highest beauty, the noblest language in the world. In this last privilege the Presbyterian and the Free Churches largely share, and the German Protestant Churches have their Lutheran Bible and their great chorales; but the systematic use of a lectionary is a great advantage in those Churches which employ fixed methods of worship.

There is an important principle also of unity in the use of printed services. Different types of character, different classes, diverging interests are brought together; rich and poor are (or should be) made to feel their common origin, weaknesses,

and needs—their common brotherhood: there is no room for class-churches, because all churches are the same. Extemporary prayer tends to be the method of a particular class, because the more sophisticated folk on the one hand and the common people on the other have generally preferred liturgical forms, the one because the old prayers are better, the other because they are better known. All classes can combine most easily in a common form of service which is at once simple and profound, and most people feel that it is easier to pray within a familiar structure of words which is well understood by all. The fixed type of service has inspired men to worship, it may be claimed, both more intensively and more extensively than any other; and in this a good ceremonial has been an important help, but ceremonial cannot be well adapted to the Free service, or at least this has not as yet been successfully done. The Salvation Army which has invented a popular effective ceremonial in the outdoor procession, could only do so within the rigid framework of the metrical hymn.

But behind all the Ecclesiastical system of worship—certainly behind all those which would be claimed as Catholic—lies a theology, a philosophy indeed of life. It is the doctrine of grace. The Catholic who is conversant with recent

scholarship will talk much less about divinely appointed means or ordinances instituted by Christ himself, and he will be wise not to ride the ecclesiastical high horse; but he will take his stand upon the doctrine of grace, and Protestants of the Ecclesiastical kind will be with him. He will claim that Christian worship is in its essence sacramental and is centred round sacraments, because the manifestation of the Word in human flesh is itself a sacrament. He will admit that sacramentalism has been distorted by magical ideas, debased by poor quantitative notions, sometimes made almost hateful by superstition, and perhaps always hardened and narrowed by legalism. These errors could only have been avoided if the Church had stood aloof from the people and failed to do her work. But the principle has never been forgotten. Even the traditional worship of virginity, which caused the ecclesiastics of the West to look with horror at the joining of two bodies in the procreation of children, did not prevent the Medieval Church from asserting the truth that marriage is a sacrament. The principle was never lost, and it is at the root of all the historic services of the Church. Grace is given us by visible means; the inward is mediated through the outward. There is no necessary evil in material things, as

there is no necessary good in spiritual activities. The good is good, and like evil is spiritual. All outward and material things can be used for good, because all can be the vehicle of spiritual good. True worship is sacramental, because life itself is sacramental, and man a living sacrament, himself the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace; and most of the good that man can win in this life comes to him through outward means.

CHAPTER X

THE MAN OUTSIDE

GRANTED a slight increase in charity, the reconciliation of the two opposing camps within organised religion would, as we have suggested, be difficult but not impossible. But there is a third camp, unorganised but numerous and growing in numbers, which greatly intensifies the problem. The Church of the Man Outside is the only Church which is not decreasing: reconciliation here will be yet more difficult.

Already at the present day in all but a few backward countries the majority do not go to church. In Great Britain and America the change has taken place within living memory, and seems to have accelerated with the present generation: forty years ago, even the galleries (which had been built to accommodate the large congregations) were generally filled (a census exists of London congregations to show that this was the case). If the working classes had on the whole drifted away, the mass of respectable and influential people

went to church on Sunday, and the vastly improved standard of clerical activity pointed to an increase in the near future. How many parsons wore themselves out in a round of visiting, confident in a speedy response! And how many of those who survive to-day would deny that their hopes were disappointed? Young people avoid the churches, not as once with a sense of misgiving but in a kind of happy innocence. They have as a rule no quarrel with organised religion and are untroubled by theological difficulties; they believe in God and in the Christian view of life, though they are quite uninterested in our controversies about episcopacy, or our theological problems; they even in a vague way like to think that services are going on, so long as they do not have to attend them.

When the London church authorities proposed to pull down some of the city churches, public opinion was nearly solid against them. Lose any of our empty churches! The thought is intolerable! You might as well propose that all the church funds should be diverted to the reduction of income tax! bishops may wish to pull down, Nonconformists to disendow, but *we* want it all to go on; we love our old churches, England would be horrible without their spires and domes; and how uplifting it is on a Sunday

to catch the strains of the organ as we rattle past on our motor-bicycles!

Now if this be at all true, the corollary follows that, because the remaining link with organised religion is æsthetic and emotional, it is by æsthetic and emotional means that the full connection must be re-established. To vary the metaphor, if one frail rope alone keeps the ship from drifting quite away, that rope must be replaced by a cable before the ship can be made fast.

The old motives for attending public worship are gone for the bulk of our people, rich and poor alike. Some were worthy, and some unworthy.

It was considered normal and respectable to go to church. Now it has ceased to be normal.

It was a recognition of the divine element in life. Now it does not seem a very appropriate recognition.

It was an opportunity for seeing the world, and for being seen. Now there are better opportunities outside.

It was a way of supporting a fine old institution. Only old-fashioned people feel this now.

It was felt to be sinful and defiantly irreligious to refuse to go. This conviction of sin is rapidly passing away.

People were supposed to grow wicked if they kept away from public prayer. Multitudes of

ordinary decent folk have now tried the experiment and find they are not any worse: often they say that church-going folk, especially their elder relations, are very unpleasant people.

There are deeper reasons.

It used to be assumed that church-going, especially in certain forms, was obligatory because Christ had so ordained it. This is now much less felt; and, as we have already pointed out, there is justification for the change, because it is not easy to prove that Christ laid down any rules on the subject at all.

It used to be assumed that God was a potentate who liked being worshipped, and who punished terribly those who refused their meed of adulation. People were told that, because God had created them, it was therefore not only meet and right but their bounden duty to humble themselves together before him. They no longer feel this, partly for the regrettable reason that they are doubtful and confused about the ultimate questions here raised, partly for the good reason that the Christian idea of God is spreading, and people think of him as a Father rather than a Sultan.

There are also many thoughtful men—whose example becomes the excuse of very many others—who not only dislike the Sultanic idea, believing

that perfect love casteth out fear, but do really shrink from the institutional and external in religion, feeling keenly that we cannot limit the divine to our own ways of method, time, or place. They have so much right on their side that we shall need the very highest ideals of worship to show them that they are wrong.

First of all, we have to remove some of the hindrances. I suppose many of us clergy learnt during the War, as I did, to understand the layman's position. We lived for months together as laymen, in all sorts of conditions and in different parts of the world; we saw how remote was clerical from lay thought, we often felt how unattractive the churches were, when we were not managing the services ourselves. "Church" to us had been a place where we did as we thought best, and displayed our little powers of eloquence: of course we liked it, and we could not understand why everyone else did not like it as well. But when we travelled about in some lay capacity, we understood a little better the very subtle feeling of repulsion which just turns the scales for so many men. Multitudes are so very near to church-going, but in modern life they are so easily deflected: slight things will keep them away. I remember how I was always terrified at the prospect of being seized by a verger or

sidesman and led into a seat: it was so much easier to worship in a strange church if I felt I could stand quietly at the back, not boxed up, but free to slip out if the music or the sermon should prove unendurable. How admirable is a great cathedral abroad, where you can go anywhere and pray, or rest, or look about, where people are kneeling around quiet altars, and the canons perhaps are singing their office in the choir, and nobody bothers about you! There the strong feature of the Medieval system, its popular freedom, has not been lost, nor are there notices warning you not to move during service time.

The other day I went into the porch of Chelsea Old Church and there was a nice notice in the porch, just asking you not to make a noise, as service was going on: so we felt welcome and went in, and stood at the back: a sensible, pleasant-voiced parson was saying the week-day Evensong with a quiet little congregation, and there was nothing to spoil the beautiful Anglican service—no bad music or silly ceremonial, and no sermon at all. It was all so beautiful and impressive, in this, one of the few churches that have escaped restoration; the atmosphere was so free from contention and so full of prayer. And I thought then how small a thing can bring men in, and what small things keep them out—only

there has been such an accumulation of small things—and I thought that if the churches ceased to give offence, men might come together again. . . .

This one example may serve to illustrate what I mean by small things—only it is really a big thing, because the average man is to-day an outsider, and will not be pounced upon, captured, or drilled, but will only drift in with his freedom intact. The more important causes are obvious enough. The old intellectual assent is gone, and everything is questioned. Our people have a wide though superficial range of ideas, and they dislike the narrowness which they find in so many churches, the obsolete and incredible things that are said in the services and more noticeably in the sermons; they despise the partizanship of which they come across evidence in their newspapers, the want of proportion, the controversies about services or ceremonies, and what seem to them mere *tabus* about such subjects as divorce, interchange of pulpits, or reunion (why in the name of common sense should they make all this fuss about different sorts of ministers? they say in their crude way). They are more liberal in their thought than the clergy, but (as when it comes to altering the Prayer Book) more conservative in their tastes.

And all the time there is the drive of the modern competitive world, making it very hard for men to remember the call of the unseen or to adjust themselves to its demands.

So much wisdom is needed in the modern church, and so much beauty. And all the time society is pervaded by a vague distrust and a more pronounced distaste. Men are not interested in the questions that excite the clergy, they do not believe in the elaborate dogmas which the clergy assent to and sometimes proclaim; they do not like the services, the hymns, the church interiors, which are a mixture of dreariness and gaudiness; they are really bored by it all. In literary circles, with the exception of two or three rather exotic Roman Catholics, and in scientific circles, the claims of organised Christianity are not even considered; and as for the other creative classes, the musicians disapprove of the music of our churches and the artists of the art. Such is the subtle barrier that keeps people away from morning and evening prayer, partly æsthetic, partly intellectual, partly due to the bad management within, and partly to the worldliness without.

The old system is in ruins, we have got to build it again, and we ought to set about the work at once, since the next generation, being formed by

the writers and artists of the present, will be a step farther away. The first work we have to do is to think, and to induce others to think. Our whole theology needs rethinking and fresh explanation, and not least the theology of prayer, both private and public.

The modern man does not consider that it is wicked to abstain from church-going: we cannot frighten him to church, and indeed we would not if we could, because we agree with him that God is love, and we know that God's power is that of love, and the only worship that is worth giving is the free response of love. I have suggested in an earlier chapter that this is true also of prayer in its very essence: we have enforced it as a duty under the law, with penalties, and people no longer believe us. The way of fear is closed. The Church has to begin over again, because her thunderbolts are gone.

Clearly then the people have to be attracted, since they cannot be driven: if they ever come to worship again in their multitudes it will be because they want to come. I know that the very word attraction sounds unpleasant, because it suggests little cunning devices and the pitiful efforts that are made to "brighten" our services; but it is the right word: our ancestors were converted to Christianity because they were

attracted: the cross attracts—nay, Christ attracts, not by any device but by his inherent power; and the only attraction which will be of any use will be that of sheer truth and excellence, as unconscious as the magnet. If men knew that they would find the truest answers to all their questionings, and all their highest aspirations fulfilled, and the best parts of their nature satisfied, if the church-doors were always open, and within was a haven of rest more beautiful and more untainted than anything else in the world, then the magnet would begin to work. It did work once in that way: the Church was once and for long the leader of thought, the home of learning, the school of morals, the palace of art. Yes, the tide might turn again.

Why then should men want to pray together? what are the reasons that should draw them?

What is prayer? It is above all contemplative, receptive, co-operative. Prayer is not a machine with the handle ready for turning, warranted to produce quick returns and never to get out of order, if regularly oiled with sacramental observances. It is not prayer when an absent-minded clergyman grinds out official collects in front of a congregation that is trying to hear, or when a minister innocent of voice-production

tries to read the lessons, or when the tenors and the altos and the basses revel in the meteorological harmonies of "For those in peril on the sea." Nor is prayer a quantitative thing—a spiritual tug-of-war, in which, if only enough people can be got to pull, and to pull long enough, they will get Heaven over to their side. It is something different in kind. We may call prayer conversation with God, using the word "conversation" in the scriptural sense of fellowship in action.

Now, God being really our father and not our tyrant, the fellowship we can find with him will be of the same kind as that of a child in its home; and the "conversation" of a nice child in a normal home is rooted in love and crowned by it—he admires his parents and makes love to them. This is Worship, and it is at once the root of prayer and its flowering corona: our average man must admire God and have some movings of love, before he wants to pray, and the church that he will want to enter must be one where God's reputation is hallowed both in truth and beauty. The rest of prayer is of a piece with this sonship: home-life would be impossible if the child was never sorry and never grateful, never said, "I beg pardon," and never said, "Thank you"—a nice father does not want his son to lacerate himself or even to be miserable, but he knows that the

child ought to be sorry when he does wrong, and to desire better things. This we call Repentance; and the other, Thanksgiving. A nice child is not always asking, asking; but he does ask sometimes, though earthly fathers often know what he wants before he asks. That we call Petition. But most of all, the dear little thing is always asking questions, considering, and thinking. This we call in grown-up persons Contemplation. And he talks a good deal but listens even more. This becomes Meditation. Last of all, as he learns, he wants to be useful with his little hands and feet; and this is Service.

Our conversation with God cannot be less than that: it cannot be mere petition, any more than mere repetition; it cannot be like that of the great talker who is a bad listener, or that of the complacent man without compunction, or of the ill-mannered man without gratitude, or of the self-centred man without admiration, or of the vulgar man without grace or beauty, or of the shallow man without reflection, the cold man without love, or the fat rascal who does no service to his fellows.

I think the average decent person who is without would be irresistibly drawn if he felt that such conversation was going on in all our services. He thinks that the Churches say prayers for the

conversion of the world, whereas it is often they who stand, arguing, between God and that regeneration; he thinks that we are continually calling him to repent, but that our own repentance is a superficial form sonorously intoned, and that we do not understand what we really have to repent of. To a great extent he is right. We are sorry for other people's sins when we have not yet discovered our own, we ask God to do things for us which can only be accomplished through us. It is easy for the Church to confess her shortcomings in a general way, but very difficult for her to effect a radical change—to be converted: it is very difficult for us to feel our own responsibility for the evil—in the Church as in the world. Yet the Church must be easier to convert to Christ than the world; and how true and flawless a weapon in God's hands she would need to be in order to do his work! Think of what the Church actually is in the eyes of the world, with her petty interests, her endless disputes, her strange standards of importance, her archaism, her timorousness; and compare this with what she must become if she is ever to convert the world—to convert the lying and boasting of the nations, and to end war, their offspring; to fight oppression and anarchy; to cure sin and sickness and misery; to remove

ignorance and ugliness and filth; to make all things new. Think of what at least our ordinary worship here among our own people will have to become, if it is ever to make men aglow for righteousness, justice, disinterestedness, for fellowship and fellow-work, for truth and for the education of all in truth, for the right use of God's world in all its beauty and abundance, for the manifestation of God in the Church and in the common life of men.

The world has ceased to hope from the Church, and in the main it is quietly leaving the Church—not the wicked world nor a mere residuum of evil-livers, but the world of normal men, the men for whom Christ died. Many indeed still remain: some because they care intensely for the highest things and have not ceased to hope; some because they need the comfort of their church, and are not sensitive to the poverty of its ideals or the ugliness of its presentation; some because they like it as it is, having made it what it is, and the creaking of its machinery and the groaning of its organ-pipes are sufficient music for their souls. But most stand outside. And is not the Judge also at the gate?

CHAPTER XI

A BRIDGE: THE ART OF SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

THE British Sunday afternoon is still a great possible asset for civilisation. Multitudes of people there still are who would like to spend it in some degree of quiet and refinement. Our forefathers made Sunday hateful by the horrid gloom of unchristian religious ideas; but at the same time they instilled a precious tradition that on this day men ought to come to the top of their lives, to clean off the dirt of the week, to be more thoughtful, more civilised—to be in fact better men. Some thirty years ago an attempt was made all over the country to provide an improving form of entertainment which should renounce the Sabbath gloom (except for the trail of Victorian hymns); this was called a "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon," and was mainly a Free Church experiment; its title showed what the normal Sunday afternoon had been like. But the experiment did not prove the success that was hoped. The art was lacking. Many Pleasant

Sunday Afternoons forced one to the reflection that the English take their pleasure sadly.

Let us now, leaving on one side the Sunday services, consider for a moment the rest of the day. Deduct eight hours from the twenty-four for sleep, and two for meals ; a possible fourteen hours are left for the active and abstemious, perhaps about twelve hours or a little less for the average man. This may be reduced to eleven and a half, ten, or nine hours in the case of that minority which goes to church or chapel. The inhabitants of the town or village have, therefore, between nine and twelve hours (or even more) on their hands. During these hours they are generally bored. Yet they have a deep-seated feeling that the time ought somehow to be devoted to the better things of life.

Now, I will imagine a small country town as the most manageable unit to begin with, keeping the village and the large town district also in mind ; and I will imagine some public-spirited, broad-minded, and well-educated man who has set himself to organise Sunday recreation for his fellow-citizens, having realised what Satan finds for idle hands to do. I suppose the English ideal is that the parson should be such a man. And why should it not be the parson ? He is paid to be there ; his duty is to look after the spiritual health of the town ; and is not the art of Sunday

Observance more important to that health than the majority of the things which nowadays exhaust his energies? I assume then that there are men anxious to act; and I assume that my ideal chief organiser is a parson of the humane and cultured type, who is not eaten up with ecclesiastical partizanship and meticulous opinions. I assume that he has therefore the confidence of his fellow-citizens, who trust him not to proselytise, and know that he will seek the co-operation of all possible helpers, whatever their religious views.

We are not considering church services at all in this intercalary chapter. We have in mind the minister who is not paralysed into futility because the majority of his fellow-citizens do not come to hear him preach. He can still do some work for Christianity! And he might find the key to some of our difficulties.

Many things can be done which I need only mention here. Some people (irrespective of creed) can be got to organise games for the young and cricket in the villages. Excursions by cycle, nature rambles, visits to museums and to churches and other buildings of interest and beauty—these possibilities are really without limit, if our chief organiser will ransack the town (irrespective of creed) for men and women who are interested in

local history and topography, in flowers, trees, birds, beasts, fishes, insects, stars, in architecture, and in the other arts and crafts. There are many such, even in a small town, but they are never drawn out; even blue-domers and agnostics will be glad to help—to the great gain of themselves and of everybody else.

All this outdoor and general occupation will, in my scheme, centre in a weekly Sunday afternoon gathering, which we call by the simple and distinctive name of Five Quarters, because that name already exists and is free from misleading associations. Now, Five Quarters is quite easy to manage, granted that the chief organiser has the normal qualifications of a healthy human being. He must not be narrow-minded, because his principal task will be to ransack the town (irrespective of creed) for every scrap of genuine talent in music, elocution, and lecturing capacity. Perhaps he will need a committee, but there must be someone of genuine understanding whose judgments will be accepted in matters of music. For it is in this subtle particular that the great danger of a breakdown will lie. Most choirs have had their musical sensibilities so degraded in past years, that a definite new move away from the traditions of the average church or chapel will have to be made. If the music is debased, Five

Quarters will gradually die away. The real reason for this is that there is a God, and, therefore, only that which comes from him can endure. That which is evil corrupts and perishes; people wonder why services dwindle—they do not understand that evil is evil, whether in music or in morals. Now the chief organiser, or some specially chosen person, can quite easily get the music right and keep it so, because he can obtain lists and buy the right music through the British Music Society, the Church Music Society, and the League of Arts. These societies can be written to, and they will recommend or supply nothing that is not both popular and good. The chief organiser, or the referee appointed for that purpose, must also know a little about literature; at least he should be able roughly to distinguish between good verse and the reverse. But he can protect himself by getting some anthologies, especially the *Oxford Book of English Verse*, the *Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*, *Poems of To-day* (first and second series), and Sir Henry Newbolt's admirable new collection. There are some twenty others, all good.

The point is, that work of this sort has been made perfectly easy nowadays for everyone who is not too conceited to listen to authority. That is why Five Quarters and the whole art of Sunday

Observance are now possible all over the country. Common sense only is needed.

Here are the bones of Five Quarters :—

1. Canson or Hymn.
2. First Reading.
3. Quartet, 1.
4. Poetry.
5. Any Special Music.
6. Notices.
7. Canson.
8. Second Reading.
9. Quartet, 2.
10. Lecture.
11. Hymn.
12. Lord's Prayer.

This lasts five quarters of an hour, the lecture taking up between twenty and twenty-five minutes, the readings (the first from the Bible) being rather shorter than those in church ; the poetry may take three or five minutes at first, but I find that the taste for it grows, and that after the first year people welcome ten minutes of it, especially if there are three or four varied poems. No. 5 can be omitted, unless a violinist, pianist, or singer comes to perform. " Quartet " means a vocal quartet, accustomed to sing together ; it sings motets, songs, and anthems. The hymns must be of a broad character, because we expect people of all religious opinions to come. A canson is a song sung by all the people together (see *The Canson Book*, S.P.C.K.), such as the " Battle Hymn of the Republic," Blake's " Jerusalem," or " Ring out, wild bells."

Five Quarters can be modified on great festivals. Here is a Christmas example to show how on a special occasion (though not often) it can conveniently be recast :—

Hymn.—" O come, all ye faithful " (the quartet leading in procession up the hall).
First Reading.—S. Luke 2, 1 to 16.
Carol.—" A Child this day is born."
Second Reading. — Conclusion of Dickens' *Christmas Carol.*
Carol, with Chorus.—" The First Nowell."
Christmas Address.—(16 minutes.)
Hymn.—" While shepherds watched."
Poem.—Extract from Matthew Arnold's " Obermann once More."
Carol.—" Angelus ad Virginem."
Poem.—Mr. Hardy's " The Oxen."
Carol.—" A Virgin most pure."
Poem.—Commander Hilton Young's " Christmas."
Carol.—The Cherry Tree Carol.
Poem.—Miss Eleanor Farjeon's " Child Carol."
Carol.—" All bells in Paradise."
Poem.—Mr. Chesterton's " The Wise Men."
Carol.—" Here we come a-wassailing."
Poem.—Mr. Chesterton's " Christmas Day."
Hymn.—" Christians, awake."
Lord's Prayer.

It is perhaps obvious that Five Quarters is meant to take place in some convenient hall. In the Middle Ages it would have happened in the nave of the parish church. So it will (or something like it) when Utopia comes. But we have first to recover the parish (which the Enabling Act has made possible in England by the creation of popularly elected Parochial Church Councils), and then to recover the parish church, which was once the central meeting-house of the people.

CHAPTER XII

REASONS FOR CHURCH-GOING

THERE is hope in the thought that we have passed the age when men can be driven into church by fear; for, now that they must be drawn by love, great changes from the old methods will come. For the practice of the new methods we must think the problem out afresh; and in the tenth chapter I tried to suggest an answer to the question, What is prayer? Let us in this proceed to the questions, Why should men go to church for prayer? and in the next, What are the methods by which they can be helped to pray?

There are many reasons (apart from the motives of habit, convention, or fear that are still operative with great numbers) which prompt men rightly to "go to church": such as a sense of duty, the wish to support an ancient and sound institution, a conviction of the good purpose in the world and a desire to bring oneself in line with it, a sudden craving for more religion, or an impulse to recall memories of past emotions and to recover the joy and reverence of childhood,

or the longing to hear the Christmas hymns or some other music, or to hear a good preacher, or to come into the atmosphere of some fine old church, which last alone must account for tens of thousands every week in the cathedrals of Christendom. All these have their weight, and the weight will increase as the churches improve. But the main reasons why men ought to go to church may be put under four heads.

1. We gain fellowship. Prayer may be exclusively private, and a godly life of intense character may be lived in isolation, as the hermits showed long ago. But "fellowship is heaven," and the lack of it in religious acts, if it is not hell, is at best not altogether Christian. People ought to attend public worship, because the company of good persons helps them to pray better, removes some of their egotism and their limitations, and promotes even in our imperfect congregations some measure of brotherly feeling, and opens some springs of charity and goodwill. It is good for neighbours to pray together, to humble themselves and to appreciate one another, to feel and to proclaim their spiritual brotherhood.

Thus public prayer is also a duty. Men ought to come together: they ought to help maintain the invaluable witness of the Sunday worship; they ought to be present for others' sake as well

as for their own, since they have something to give; and they ought not to complain of the inadequacy of the services if they are doing naught to improve them.

2. We can draw nearer to God. Some would deny this and would say that they can get closer to God in a country walk, among the infinite glories of God's own handiwork; and here we are thrown back again upon our æsthetic difficulties, and have to admit that whereas Nature reveals some part of God's character, our modern churches do conceal that part; in Nature all is lovely, in most churches nothing is. We have to admit that for many men some of the thin gauzy veils, which in their accumulation hide God from us, are lifted in the hills and meadows, or in their Sunday home-life, or in their gardens or their studies, whereas more veils seem to be added in church—not only by the cheap conventional ugliness, but also sometimes by bad music, repellent manners, or foolish ceremonial, and sometimes by dull or unspiritual sermons: the Protestant so often fails to justify his claim, "No man shall come between me and my God," for many sermons hide the love of God, or vulgarise the conception of the divine nature, or obscure the plain teaching of the Gospels. And on the Catholic side the iconography often adds veils of

its own, and men lose sight of their Creator behind a cloud of more or less mythical statues, and morbid representations of incidents in the Passion which are often unhistorical and always false to the grave reticence of the Gospel narratives. Men are more critical of these things than they were, and at the same time have other resources, since they can escape from the oppression of week-day routine at each week-end far more easily than they could.

I think we can only answer this charge by saying that the characteristic architectures of Christendom until the seventeenth century were consonant with Nature, did focus the beauty of the world around in an ordered religious intention, and did actually enhance the æsthetic significance of the landscape; while we have to admit that the nineteenth century did destroy so far as was economically practicable what then remained of that traditional loveliness, and erected a large number of new churches that it requires an effort to enter. We cannot be surprised that the buildings of our religion, and the services within them, fail to attract. We can only be humble about it. But we can also get encouragement from the fact, which the present writer knows from experience, that the most unpromising church can in twenty years be transformed into

something not altogether intolerable. Walls are seldom repulsive in themselves, and the rest can be changed.

Among devout church-goers there is of course very much more to be said: the divine and sacramental presence is accentuated; on all sides it is proclaimed, and on all sides believed, that the Spirit of God is present. The blue-domer (as I have ventured before to call him) is sometimes a little hypercritical—a little high-browed. And although he shows by his absence that he does not admit the truth of this tremendous claim, we can at least assure him that we find it to be true; and that there is a Christlike knowledge of human psychology as well as of the divine nature in the Matthean saying—apart from all questions of ecclesiastical definitions, or of æsthetics, apart indeed from place altogether—that the gathering of two or three together brings with it the divine presence. It is true that in church we can draw near to God—putting all the palpable obstacles aside, shutting our eyes, if need be, and putting wax into our ears, and forgetting the clergyman as the admirable eucharistic ceremonial makes it so easy to do—we can in quietness and strength realise God's presence as nowhere else. It is difficult for the outsider to make up his mind to come in (and that is the fault of the past which we inherit),

but once inside, he finds that he can worship—the perplexities drop away, the pressure of daily life is loosened, its hindrances forgotten. God is present—here indeed as everywhere, but here less hidden. The testimony of all mankind proclaims that God is best to be found in the places where he is worshipped.

3. We can learn. The church is a great centre of spiritual understanding. It is easier for a normal man to be receptive in church—receptive especially in the silence, of which we still do not make enough, but receptive also among the ritual and the ceremonial of the ecclesiastical service, and receptive also among the up-to-date prayers and the more accentuated preaching atmosphere of the other side; and on both sides receptive to the spirit of devotion and to the reading of noble and godly scriptures. Even the educated man has, after all, much to learn—much that he can learn also from the humble; and even the highly-educated man can learn much from a simple preacher who has spiritual experience behind him and takes some pains to study his subject.

I confess I think the practice of reading might be much extended: in the Middle Ages passages from Augustine and others, as well as extracts from the lives of the saints, were read in the Breviary;

and the principle is right, because it is not fundamentally reasonable to read, in addition to the New Testament, only that preparation for it which is contained in the English Protestant Bible—excluding the great pertinent passages from the Apocrypha and from teachers like Socrates or Plato, Seneca also indeed, and Epictetus, who supply just those philosophical elements in which the intuitional Hebrews were weak. It is surely even less reasonable to supplement the New Testament with pre-Christian writings, and to ignore all the subsequent saints, philosophers, and poets who have written under the Christian inspiration: there is no reason tenable to-day why we should prefer Leviticus, Judges, and Chronicles to Thomas à Kempis, or to Wordsworth, Ruskin, or Browning. And perhaps I may add, since I have had the opportunity of trying the experiment (in the informal religious meeting already described,[1] which is based upon this idea of understanding), that the Old Testament holds its own, and that nothing reads so well as the Bible, but that readings from the poets and great prose-writers are immensely valuable. We need a modern lectionary to supplement the old.

In many ways the church is a place of understanding—of recollection, wisdom, intellectual

[1] Chapter XI.

inspiration. I admit that it has not always been so. I admit that the accredited teachers of Christendom have not even succeeded in showing the people that God is love. Our greatest woman-missioner to-day has to spend all her time at first, in each place she visits, in removing the misconceptions that the people must have learnt from the clergy of the past—that God is the author of disease, the deviser of unthinkable torments, and that the character of this cruel and wrathful tyrant is accurately portrayed in such stories as that of Saul and Agag, David and the census, or Elisha and the bears. I really do not wonder that people stay outside. The first step in recovery would be for a great mission to move over the length and breadth of the land, telling people not to believe in ideas that are an insult to Christianity. If we could in this way make a clean sweep, once and for all, of the lies which are so seldom openly repudiated, all churches might be what many are already, true places of understanding and wisdom.

The Church should indeed be wiser, purer, than she is; all the clergy—with such vast responsibilities—should be what the best are already—men who avoid party-spirit and sectarianism, caring only for the truth. Meanwhile, the sensible layman can avoid the mere party

church, just as he can avoid the screaming party newspaper, illiterate books, inaccurate lectures, or unmusical concerts; for caricatures are not peculiar to religion. In the normal church he can get help; and the greatest intellectual help that any of us can have is that which keeps us from forgetting the different sides of the truth, restores what has grown dim, and keeps all our interests alert.

4. We can be quickened to endeavour. As with our intellect, so with our emotions, which also need to be drawn out and directed. The church is the place where only the highest things are contemplated, where men hold out their hands to God and accept the ideals of the Kingdom of Heaven. It might be more of this: yes, and the clergy ought to make it so, but so ought the laity as well, and so ought those who stand outside and complain. Here is the instrument of the Kingdom of Heaven, faulty in its working as we all admit, but deep-rooted in tradition and full of enormous potentiality. There is nothing on the remotest horizon that can take its place. And even as it is, the church is a home where we are presented with a different ideal from that of the world with its hard self-seeking: it is a place where men are pledged to charity, pledged to self-offering, pledged to co-operation with the

will of God ; it is a place where millions are still converted from evil, stirred to personal endeavour, inspired by the thought of great enterprise, and where many are finding at this moment the inspiration which is leading them to a crusade for the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHAPTER XIII

METHODS OF PUBLIC WORSHIP: INTELLECTUAL

Let us now consider the methods employed in church. We have tried to answer the questions, "What?" and "Why?" we will now attack the question, "How?"

I think the true answer is the very humble one that the best methods of public worship are those that produce the best crowd-psychology. Our forefathers would not have expressed themselves in these terms: perhaps they would have been often content to say, "Verily, God is in this place," but they knew also that God is in every place, and that something has to be done in order that for us he may be realised in one place more than another: and they always did it. God cannot be limited by time or space; but men being what they are, dependent in the first place for almost all they know upon sense-impressions, we can make God more accessible to man by intelligible and natural means. To revert to our former metaphor: life imposes many gauzy veils, religion can remove them one after the other.

The methods can perhaps be classified as intellectual, psychic, and æsthetic, though of course they overlap. We need give less space to the first, because it is the best understood, and has already been discussed in the last chapter.[1]

First we must face an intellectual method which has become a barrier for many—the practice which has grown up since the tenth century of making the creeds part of normal public worship. It is right that people should unite in an atmosphere of positive assertion; and in the Middle Ages, when the practice arose, it was natural to express this assertion in formulas which everyone accepted: but the recitation of creeds is not an essential part of public worship, as it is not a Catholic practice; and the ancient creeds are not to-day formulas which everyone accepts. Therefore they are an obstacle, and not a help. It is not only true that very many earnest and thoughtful Christians cannot accept them: it is also true that no educated man, however orthodox, accepts them altogether in their literal sense, or in the sense in which they were originally held. I need not labour this point: every theologian knows it, including those who (like myself) hold that the

[1] See pp. 203–6.

creeds are the best available expression of what we believe. The united Church did not fall into the modern mistake of fixing long theological confessions upon her members; she defined slowly and with great reserve, setting forth forms that were brief and few, and altering those forms at first from age to age, expecting that they would be altered again in the future. The disunion of Christendom prevented that further alteration; and to-day the two creeds remain: they are neither entirely Catholic, since the Apostles' Creed is Western, and the Nicene, which is the creed of the Eastern Church, has been altered in the West; but they are extraordinarily good in their balance, reserve, and truth, although they were framed under a philosophy and cosmogony that have long passed away. Let the clergy expound them and explain them—they could not do better, but let them also remember how many of the best laymen cannot take upon their lips formulas of which so many terms have changed in meaning and need the technical explanation of the trained theologian. I believe firmly in the value of these noble formulas which express the common mind of all Christendom: they are of infinite value in showing that the great mass of ideas which the world to-day finds incredible —distorted notions about the Bible and the

Atonement, for instance, or about the Sacraments and the Church, or Calvinism and Hell—are not contained in the historic creeds of the Catholic Church; and they present the essentials of Christian theology in right proportion: but, none the less, they are not prayer; and, incorporated into the prayers of the Church, they are a barrier which will not grow less obstructive during the present century.

That we should have so far only considered the intellectual element as a hindrance, is an illustration of the importance of the other two elements: the psychic and æsthetic do help men to overcome the intellectual difficulties which must always exist, because the very nature of common worship brings together people of many opinions, many stages of intellectual development. Yet for all its difficulties, the intellectual element is a constant factor of importance—yes, the credal element itself, the element of affirmation, is essential so long as it corresponds with men's longing for truth.

But for the ordinary church-goer the element of instruction is the main factor on the intellectual side. He is helped because he learns; by the prayers, psalms, hymns, lessons, and by the sermon, his thought is drawn upwards and attuned to the eternal things. Of those who stay without,

only a small number are really held back by intellectual difficulties : the majority are thoughtless. But in the long run it is the thinking people who count ; and it is our duty to sacrifice all our fears and all our comfortable habits to truth, not only because we believe in God and must therefore follow truth, but also for the inferior reason that otherwise the Church will lose still more of those who matter most. The Church must make herself acceptable to all God-loving Christian-minded men, as she did a thousand years ago ; and then our congregations will include the religious men of goodwill, and all will be moved to worship by the irresistible appeal of truth.

But words are inadequate : the most perfect phrase can only be a symbol that suggests the truth—even the Fatherhood of God is but a metaphor of one side of parenthood. The Church cannot inculcate even intellectual truth by intellectual means alone, without the help of the psychic and æsthetic factors.

We have to be clear about this. Words do but partly cover the intellectual ground. They never fully represent our thought ; and this is one reason why men have been so ready to use religious expressions that are not strictly intelligible, so careless sometimes of logical coherence : they

have suspected, and rightly suspected, the apparent finality of terms and phrases; they were aware that they knew things which they could not express; they called in art to declare the transcendence of God. The same inadequacy exists on the psychological side: all our recent exploration of the human mind, conscious and subconscious, increases our conviction of the comparative insignificance of impressions conveyed by logical means alone. Such means do not produce the deepest knowledge, or unite men best together and to God. They are a frame, a safe-guard, an indispensable element in the realisation of truth; but, holding fast to the help which they afford, man has to "break through language and escape." Words are but symbols, and the greatest teachers are therefore the poets, who arrange words in the form of art. That our Lord felt this deeply is shown by all his teaching; he spoke always as a poet, symbolically and without ratiocination. All his teaching suggests more than it states; and the reason why Christendom has been so slow in understanding it—wherefore it has come again as a new revelation in the present century—is because nearly all the exegetists, ancient and modern, have been devoid of poetic understanding. How seldom do they get farther than an occasional reference to "Oriental

paradox," when they are confronted with a phrase of sheer poetry! Indeed it is true that " he that hath ears to hear, let him hear " : every poet might put that challenge on the title-page of his works.

CHAPTER XIV

PSYCHIC METHODS

MODERN psychology, still in its childhood, has taught us to appreciate the psychic elements in any public gathering. Even in private, words and phrases—shibboleths and *mantras*—quickly acquire a psychic power by frequent repetition, and a very evil power it is: the Churches are half-paralysed by cant phrases.

In church there is first the mysterious element of crowd-psychology: people are different when they are together, the individual has something added to him, or taken away. So it is in church: men are helped to worship by the "atmosphere" of devotion which is created by their neighbours, which perhaps hangs about the building itself: we all know what it is to be lifted up by the fervour of those about us; and there must be few men, however irreligious, who have not, at some time of their life, in some place, felt that it was almost easy to pray. But as the psychic influence of others can exalt, so can it also be a hindrance, when a congregation gathers together

in the motive of convention and exhales a spirit of perfunctory dreariness.

Those who prefer the Free Church method of worship often forget how much, in their distrust of the æsthetic factor, they lean upon the psychic. We might indeed almost classify the Free Church method as psychic and the Ecclesiastical as æsthetic, the intellectual being common to both in their higher forms ; but there is this difference, that the Free Church method has in practice almost excluded the æsthetic appeal (even the hymns being chosen for their emotional and not their æsthetic quality), whereas the Ecclesiastical method leaves much room for all kinds of psychic appeals. The " powerful " sermon of course is largely psychic, and it is seldom easy for orators, whether political or religious, to be entirely veracious, because they are using, consciously or unconsciously, many devices which are not of an intellectual nature : this is why the lecturer, however eloquent he may naturally be, is never an orator—his business is to convey truth, not to exhort, but to leave truth to work in its own way ; and thus, though he uses illustration, poetry, epigram, humour, he does not try to " thrill," and if he is entrancing it is not in the original sense of the word. The Gospel records show, I think, that the Lord used the methods of the

lecturer and not those of the preacher, appealing always to men's reason, and enforcing his thought with illustration, poetry, epigram, and an abundant humour which we have overlooked; and I hope for the time when the sermon will be more of a lecture—as the most memorable sermons always are—and people will no longer demand to be hypnotised. They are disappointed, because only a few preachers have marked psychic powers, and they deserve to be disappointed. The man who can rightly wield to their extreme limit these tremendous unseen weapons in complete purity of heart and with full intellectual power, comes, like John Wesley, once in a century; and we must plan our immediate campaign without him.

There are many kinds too of psychic influence, and a volume might be written about them. On the one hand there is the influence of discarnate spirits—the angels, saints, and "all the company of heaven," and the friends departed—as Christians have always believed. If Catholicism has in its development greatly over-systematised the communion of saints, Protestantism has fallen into the other extreme of vagueness; but the whole matter is coming now into the domain of experimental science, and we shall find, I believe, that it deserves the prominence given to it in the

creeds with such an admirable combination of definiteness and reserve.

On the other hand, there are the common and now universally recognised influences of suggestion and self-suggestion, which may be set to work not only by the personality of the preacher or other ministers but by the ritual or ceremonial, by music, by the use of certain instruments such as the monstrance, by places of sacred repute, by shrines and relics, statues, ikons, and holy wells. Suggestion potent enough to heal obstinate diseases is easily evoked. We cannot analyse these forces, or trace them to their origins in other spirits or in our own : we can only recognise their power and remember the danger both of misusing them and of building dogmatic structures upon our ignorance of them.

We have also to remember again that prayer itself is a psychic activity ; [1] it is the highest form of telepathy, which is defined as the communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another independently of the recognised channels of sense ; and receptive prayer is the highest form of suggestion, not of self-suggestion but of divine suggestion—that impression of the Holy Spirit both upon our subconscious and conscious mind which we call inspiration.

[1] See p. 40.

In the silence, these psychic powers work in their purest and strongest form—at least so it would seem if we follow the advice of the Lord and judge men by their fruits; for the Quakers staked everything upon the silence, and have since been several generations ahead of other Christians both in general competence, in good works, and in theological sanity—tolerance inspired by sincere enthusiasm. We are all using the silence a great deal more to-day; but it is well to remember that it had been empirically discovered long ago in the practice of "hearing Mass": in the Middle Ages the original purpose of the Lord's Supper was almost lost, and the Mass had become something very different from the Communion, but the worshipper who knelt quietly in church while the priest muttered inaudibly at the altar was enjoying the benefits of the silence while he worshipped the divine presence. With the Reformation came a new era—the air was cloudy with words, the intellectual side of religion was greatly overstressed; and after a century of preaching and of thunderous bible-reading, the Quakers inaugurated a reaction of silence which had more of the Medieval spirit than they knew. The Quaker stressed the psychic element against the barrenness of mere intellectualism, and, like the non-communicating

worshipper at Mass, he worshipped at a Liturgy of the Spirit; he also found the real presence, and he used it in an ardent fellowship of mutual help which has brought him nearest of all perhaps to that "Liturgie du Saint-Esprit" which was in the Apostolic Church "une vraie liturgie, avec présence réelle et communion."[1] The Irvingites endeavoured to carry the resemblance farther, and, not for the first time in Christian history, revived glossolaly; but their movement was weakened by a mistaken literalism in their reading of the prophetic and liturgical parts of the Bible, and the Quakers remain, with the mystics of all creeds, the masters of silent receptive prayer. The silence does not cover the whole ground of public worship but only a small platform on the summit: it forms an aristocracy of prayer and leaves the world at large, including the common people, outside; but that aristocracy will lead the world; and, from the wisdom that it learns in silent receptivity, the solution of our religious problems will come, and ultimately, it may be, the healing of the nations.

Of course all three methods, intellectual, psychic, æsthetic, may be and are misused: egotism will clutch at anything, from a sermon to a chasuble; superstition will worship anything,

[1] P. 71.

from a Bible to a bone: the intellectual method is often spoilt by false argument and rhetorical devices, as well as by that curious trick of the human mind which causes men to venerate documents merely because they are old. The psychic method, in its silent activities, does much to correct the misuse of the sermon because it places men in direct relation with God; but in other forms it is often unhealthy, "hypnotic," deceptive, and a positive enemy to intellectual truth. The æsthetic method may also be misused, and in the same way as the intellectual—by being false: cheapness and flashiness, worldliness and pomposity, and all that is flatulent, insincere, or out of proportion is bad for religion; it is bad also for art, since bad art is art without due significance—that which substitutes skill for content, and sacrifices the inward to the outward.

CHAPTER XV

ÆSTHETIC METHODS—CONCLUSION

In the religious world of Great Britain, however, it has only been the misuse of art that has been taken into account. The intellectual element has been assumed as somehow above criticism, the psychic element has been freely used and hardly ever recognised, but the æsthetic has been condemned as "sensuous"—and that word has been vaguely understood as not far removed from sensuality.

Now as a matter of simple historical fact, the misuse of the intellectual and psychic elements, with the consequent ethical degradation, has always been the gravest danger in all religions, and the cause of the deterioration of organised Christianity from the religion of Christ. It is strange that the Reformers failed to discover this, the main cause of the system they disliked, and that they devoted so much of their attention to the destruction of the beautiful; for the characteristic priestly failings (which affected Christianity, as in

a greater degree they transformed Buddhism) were not due to the arts : the overwhelming of the prophetic by the priestly element was not caused by the fact that the priest came in the end to wear finer (though not more picturesque) clothes than the prophet, but was due to the settlement of religion ; since there is more demand for priests than for prophets, when people are converted and desire to live docile and respectable lives. Even idolatry has not been due to the art of the sculptor —he merely followed the instructions of the priest, and the priest followed the people who demanded and said, " Up, make us gods which shall go before us." It was indeed the sculpture of Greece which destroyed idolatry by substituting beauty for magic and turning the gods into human beings : idolatry had come about from intellectual and psychic causes ; and real art set the divine attribute of beauty in its place—the age of Plato followed the age of Phidias.

Art, then, as a matter of fact has not been misused as reason or suggestion has : it has not been continually false and bad, for really bad art is a passing disease peculiar to the modern era and without precedent in history. All other art has been good in its degree—very good : it has not degraded the ideas of men but has been better

than their ideas, because in art men express most adequately the best that is in them.

It is true that art is sensuous, just as speech and literature are sensuous, because, like them, it reaches the mind through the sense-organs and the fibres of the sensory nerves. Preaching a sermon against sensuality is equally sensuous, or listening to it, or reading the most spiritual passages of the Bible, because the spiritual is there also conveyed through the sense-organs. God has made us that way : We are not discarnate creatures moving in a world of pure spirit ; and to object to the sensuous is to cry out against God, who has lent us bodies of flesh and set us in the midst of a material universe, giving us our sense-organs not as a bondage to the flesh but as a means of escape from it. We Christians at least ought to believe that this material creation was not a mistake on his part ; and that it was not by accident that he made our bodies, and the world their environment, full of spiritual significance by making them extremely beautiful ; and also that it was not a divine blunder which taught men to fashion works of art ; because art is the supreme way in which we make our sense-organs into a means of escape from the world of matter.

Nothing is farther from the truth than the common idea that art is something unspiritual

or sensual, or that certain arts are more sensual than others. Some are more sensuous: sculpture appeals to the tactile as well as to the optic nerves, and so in a more imaginative and less sensuous way does the best painting; and such double appeal is amply provided in nature—many objects are as delightful to touch as they are to behold, while others (like flowers) appeal also to the olfactory nerve, and others (like birds in the temperate climes) appeal to our sense of colour, form, and movement, and are musical as well—even the dance in its simultaneous combination of movement and sound has its free counterpart in that wonderful invention of God, the skylark, which sings as it soars, the embodiment of joy in motion. We cannot of course get away from the senses, and the barest conventicle appeals to the optic, auditory, tactile, and (though less pleasantly) to the olfactory nerves as much as the richest cathedral—though I would add that the sense of smell is offended by the stale candle-grease and bad incense of some Continental churches (aggravated by rancid sanctuary oil and boots in Russia) sometimes more than by the peculiar aroma of kid-gloves and varnish which silently proclaims our respectable Protestantism at home.

One has to labour this point. There is nothing

in sight more sensuous (or more sensual) than in sound: in the realm of physiology, both equally appeal to the mind, one through the nerve that enters the back of the eyeball, the other through the nerve behind the ear; in that of physics, sight is due to the vibrations in the ether, while sound is due to those in the far grosser medium of the air; in that of ethics either can be used to the highest ends, or misused. It all depends on the use: the appeal of printing, that beautiful art, is spiritual on a prayer-card, sensual on a *menu*—and to do them justice, Protestants like other good Christians, appreciate both these uses of the art.

Let me then repeat it. The exclusion from worship of certain forms of beauty has been one of the weakest spots in Protestantism, both philosophically and practically, and there is no defence for this, or for the traditional dislike of the arts, that will hold water for five minutes. People who argue that beauty is sensuous do generally confuse "sensuous" with "sensual" and assume a certain licentiousness in that which affects the senses, forgetting the great Puritan's definition of poetry as "simple, sensuous, and passionate," forgetting also, we may add, that the Incarnation of the Word was sensuous. Like prayer itself, sensuous methods or appeals may be good or bad in so far

as they are used for good or bad ends: all music is sensuous, although music is the most subtle and least material of the arts, all preaching is sensuous, and an art is not less sensuous because it affects the auditory instead of the visual sense. It is only when they derive from and appeal to the lower elements in our nature that any arts can be accused of sensuality: painting is not more sensual than speaking—a picture may be sensual, like Titian's Urbino Venus (which is Giorgione's Dresden Venus painted with equal mastery but sensualised), or it may be the exact opposite, like the Annunciation of Fra Angelico or the five great Crucifixions of Tintoret: in sculpture, nothing in the world is less sensual or more sensuous than the statuary on the French thirteenth-century cathedrals (and no sculpture, we may add, is further from iconolatry); while, on the other hand, sensuality is mostly promoted by the subtle influence of speech and still more by the wholly spiritual activity of thought.

The dislike of art (in some of its forms) is really a mechanical inheritance from Puritanism, which was sour towards human joy and disliked certain forms of art, not only because these were associated with the old religion but also because they were gay and happy. Puritanism was not against pleasure as such—it was voluptuous in comparison

with the asceticism of the earlier monks or of the Counter-Reformation, it was entirely free from the morbid horror of sexual love which had so long tainted Christianity—knowing its Bible too well to fall into this error; but it would not have produced the strong character that it did unless it had made some refusals, and the discipline it chose was to avoid joy, not to avoid pleasure. Somehow it created all over Europe what is now called the *bourgeois* spirit—immersed in business and averse to vice, strong, hard, capable, respectable, trustworthy, seeking comfortable square houses with expensive furniture and heavy meals. They were not abstainers from life's luxuries, those old Puritans; they drank indeed a good deal, and cared much for solid joys and lasting pleasures, but they were set against the old cheerful spirit: their bitter theology, the element of reaction in their religion, and their own predilections caused them to choose (for that element of abstinence which is necessary to all noble life) just those innocent pleasures which are most natural to mankind. Happiness is not the end of art, but certain forms of art do give us extreme delight, and these the Puritans suppressed, both in and out of church. Music they spared, because music could be restricted to its more solemn forms; but the arts of colour were indomitably cheerful,

the plastic arts were associated in their minds with superstition, and ceremonial could have no appeal to men who regarded dancing round the maypole with horror.

Again let me repeat—to guard against a common falsehood—puritanism was not invented by the Puritans. It had been the curse of ecclesiastical teaching during the Middle Ages. Everything that the Puritans said against beauty, or dancing, or the innocent joy of life, can be paralleled again and again in the writings of the chief Medieval teachers, priests and monks alike; and these added horrible views about woman, from which the Puritans were free.

Less easily distorted than the other two elements, hardly ever distorted at all till the later Renaissance, the Counter-Reformation, and what is called with some injustice the Jesuit style, art can correct as well as express the intellectual and psychic elements. Even into the horrible doctrines about hell which the theologians invented, the artist introduced some humanity and humour, and artist-poets like Dante introduced some measure of sanity and justice. Art in general has been used to express a truth about God, either architecturally, or pictorially, or dramatically by reading, rhetoric, ritual, and ceremonial; and art has

usually expressed the truth better than the doctors of theology.

And if fellowship is mainly dependent upon the emotions and upon influences which are more or less psychic, we must not forget that art, here also, supplies a permanent corrective to the faults which arise on the psychic side: the solemn cathedral outlives the vagaries of the pulpit-thriller (how few of the great missioners have preached a sane or sound theology!), the stately ceremonial endures unchanged through the passing wave of herd-fanaticism, the quiet beauty of sculpture, of painted canvas or glass, comes back and back again to speak to the new generations, and appeals to them not less insistently than to their forefathers. When all else of the past is forgotten or contemned, its art remains to plead for it: nobody reads the old parchment volumes in the cathedral library, everyone reads the cathedral; no one is moved by the old sermons that are almost as obsolete now as old science, everyone is moved by old music. The psychic forces were of the moment, but their results were embodied by the artist and kept alive: S. Francis lives in Giotto, his life of psychic "powers" (as S. Paul would have called them) is the most potent of all personal memories to-day because his life was a poem.

Indeed fellowship brings art along with it, not only because art is itself a matter of relations, but because it is a necessity as soon as men gather together. Private prayer can dispense with the arts, public prayer cannot. A congregation needs a place for worship, and architecture, the noble mother of the arts, is called in, with the minor arts in attendance—wood-work, metal-work, glass, and textiles : the arts of prose and poetry in their highest form are the substance of the Bible ; for its transmission the arts of printing and elocution are required ; for its exposition, that of rhetoric. Music is also found, and much care and money are spent upon it ; there is certain to be ceremonial of some kind, and in almost every case a ritual structure at least. Vestments, which are always some old secular article of costume retained by the minister after it has fallen out of general use—such as the chasuble, the gown, or the frock-coat—are found nearly everywhere ; and modern Protestantism is no longer shy of sculpture, or even of painting in its most deadly and inescapable form, the stained-glass window.

All these matters belong to the realm of art. They do not cease to be art when they are badly done ; they only become bad art : the un-English Anglican who cannot read the lessons properly is still an artist, though an absurd one ; the modern

conventicle with its sham-Gothic front is still an example of architecture, though a debased one. And all fellowship in worship brings with it that great comprehensive area of expression which we call dramatic art, from its noblest forms to its mere theatrical tricks :—silence and speech, simple action and gorgeous ceremonies, church-bells and church-candles, crucifixes, images, relics, shrines, rosaries, devices of music, devices of the thrilling moment, of entrances and exits, the ceremonial of the mass, the ceremonial of the pulpit, processions, testimony, costume, incense, the postures of the ministers and the congregation, the very plan of the building, the very structure of the service, and the order which a concourse of people renders necessary. All these are dramatic means by which the worshipper is assisted ; they may be well done or badly done, beautiful or ugly, true or false ; and some need to be discarded because the help they give is of the wrong kind.

The point is that we should give up talking nonsense about sensuousness, and should face the issues in a reasonable manner. If any of these means do harm, let us change them or give them up—not because they are " art " and therefore unworthy of God's service, but simply because they do harm. For my own part, I have come to the conclusion, after much thought, that the precarious

condition of organised Christianity at the present day is due, not only to the conflict of a disappearing bad theology with historical and natural science, and with morals, but also (and, I am inclined to think, in greater measure) to bad art. Let me explain.

The first object of art in religion is to produce a right environment, and this is done first and most of all by architecture ; but the effect of good architecture can be destroyed by bad (and especially by excessive) internal decoration, and bad architecture can be almost redeemed by whitewash and internal clearance. Now a right environment was always necessary even when the world was beautiful ; but the nineteenth century made the world ugly and vile, except in those country villages which escaped the worst of its works. At the present day therefore, far more than ever before, an escape from the world is necessary for religion, and refuge from the base monotony of the streets, their mendacious advertisements, their racket and hooting, their trivial interests and pervading incitements to the lower instincts : men nowadays unconsciously walk through the streets with half-closed eyes and ears ; and every architect knows that when he removes the scaffolding from his finest work, not one man in a hundred will notice any change, not one in a thousand would be able to describe one feature in

his design: men see only the contents-bills with their criminology and betting news, the posters with their apotheosis of alcohol, and the shop-windows which outside a few rich streets are pitiful and base—especially in this country.

The Church has a unique and easy opportunity of providing a refuge, lovely and sublime, from the sordid drama of the world and the demoralising environment of our modern streets. She has failed. The failure in its acute form began in the nineteenth century. We often hear of the theological collapse in front of Darwinism: the collapse in art began somewhat earlier, and was common to the Church and the world. We can trace it quite clearly in the inscriptions of our churchyards, for the art of lettering is a curiously exact index in this matter: between 1810 and 1820 men ceased to be able to shape good letters. At the same time architecture, which had been ailing from the disease of pedantry since the discovery of Vitruvius in the fifteenth century, grew incurably sick, and died—an event which had not happened in civilised history before.

England was in a bad way at the time, and the Church of England had become unpopular: she was fast losing her attractiveness. In the eighteenth century she had been strong in popular esteem: the more we study that period, the more

we find that, with all its evils, the divorce between religion and life was not among them. The people belonged to the Church—which included at that time the Methodist movement: the old simple life had not been changed into the misery of the Industrial Revolution. England was mainly agricultural, and the village church was the centre of village life, while the town churches also were well ordered and well attended, and furnished in the best taste of an age that produced Chippendale and the brothers Adam. A large number of the ablest men in England and Scotland—scholars, University dons, members of the Royal Society—were ministers of religion, and preached. In the villages the church orchestra was an institution of the greatest importance: everyone who had any music at all played one of its varied and curious instruments, or sang in the choir: the tunes were excellent—our best hymns and anthems, with none of our worst. A typical small church had a band consisting of two flutes, one oboe, one bassoon, two violins, one bass-viol, and a double-bass. No doubt the execution left much to be desired: the sound of the serpent, seraphine, trombone, triangle, and vamp-horn (which was about seven feet long)—not to mention the assistance of the cornet, French horn, cornopean, banjo, flutina, concertina, drum, pipe,

and kettle-drum—must have been sometimes confusing in a church of village-folk; but it was their own, and their best. There was plenty of colour too: in one Sussex church the minstrels and singers wore white smock-frocks; at another the male singers wore smocks, buckskins, and yellow stockings, and the women red cloaks; white straw poke bonnets trimmed with cambric at another, with pink and white print dresses.[1] To such services, bright with the art that the people themselves knew how to apply, came the whole village of a Sunday, the families walking leisurely across the fields in their delightful Sunday clothes, and chatting in the churchyard, until the parson came along in his cocked hat and gown. Although there was much no doubt to criticise, the setting of religion in those days must have been attractive and sincere, expressing what was best in the people's aspirations. Above all, the churches themselves were still beautiful; they had been altered and reduced in splendour, but we can see from the few unrestored churches that now remain how amiable still were those dwellings. To enter one of them is to come into a memorable, comely home, and to be satisfied.

But architecture died before Victoria came to

[1] See *Sussex Church Music in the Past.* K. H. Macdermott. Chichester, Moore and Wingham.

the throne, and that long reign was filled with reaction and confusion, while a few men groped after the light. Most of what was old and good was destroyed; what the pedantry of the Vitruvians and Palladians had failed to do was rapidly accomplished by the Gothic revivalists and ecclesiologists: the homelike beauty was swept away, in the majority of places the old plastered walls were stripped and the venerable grace of mouldings and traceries replaced by harsh imitations; the old wood-work was torn down, and the sanctuary stuck about with intolerable imitations of the antique from the new church-shops. The people had not the knowledge to criticise (though after all they knew good workmanship when they saw it), and I daresay most of them tolerated the changes at first, and even accepted with resignation the destruction of that centre of village life, the church orchestra; but the spell had been broken. The people ceased to feel the church as their home.

To-day our churches and chapels are artificial. They represent a highly conventionalised religious idea which is not understood by the people—nor indeed do the clergy themselves understand it, nor do I. It is just something fancied, unnatural, uncomfortable, which has broken with tradition and yet is not in touch with the present.

This was made worse fifty years ago by the imitation of Continental methods, which set up a peculiar clerical tradition that at this moment is paralysing the Church of England and further alienating the people.

The methods of the Roman Church, and of the Eastern Church also in a less marked degree, are like our own increasingly unsuccessful in retaining the people, but we shall more appropriately confine our criticisms to the worship at home. Sin against beauty can never be analysed by the people, but it is deeply felt. They say vaguely that church is dull, and that they don't want it; then someone makes rather hectic efforts to "brighten" services, and a few rather unwholesome youths perhaps are "converted" for a year or two, until they drift away. Fifty years ago a peculiarly corrupt form of religious music, associated at one end with the names of Dykes and Barnby and at the other with those of Moody and Sankey had a great success—Dykes became as popular in the chapels as he was among the users of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*: the new music fitted exactly the sentimental artificiality which was creeping over the Church and making isolation between the clerical world and the common life of England. To-day those popular tunes survive as a deadly incubus: workmen in factories sing

them in mockery, and they keep the musical world away from the Church. But here let me quote a distinguished musical critic, Mr. W. J. Turner, whose words bring a note of encouragement to those—and they are not a few—who are striving for better things :—

> " Among the main obstacles to the purification of taste are the Churches. . . . There seems to be something about a choir that attracts to it all the dullest and most inartistic people in the neighbourhood, and all the people without any voices. . . . The young people whose musical taste is first formed in the church carry this taste with them into the music-hall, and the close affinity in music of both these popular institutions will have escaped no penetrating observer. We can safely declare that England will never again become a great musical nation until we have real music and real musicians in the church and in the music-hall, just as two hundred years ago you could hear Corelli's sonatas in any London ' pub.' " [1]

I am sure that artists of all kinds would pass a similar condemnation upon the Church's use of the different arts they practise. The fact is that sin against beauty, like sin against truth, always finds us out. Among the common people

[1] *Music and Life*, p. 66.

it may produce only a vague want of response, or be unwelcome as something unfamiliar and without meaning, or as a break with a dimly felt tradition—or it may even be "popular" for a few years, if nothing else is given them; but to the creators, the world of art and letters, it is a plain offence, contemptible, blasphemous. And can we suppose that it is not blasphemous to the Creator also?

Art is the one language common to all mankind, the *lingua franca* of heaven as well as earth. All can understand it in the measure of their capacity for understanding; the artist speaks to all the world, and he speaks to all time, for his work does not lose its value with the lapse of centuries, nor does it ever become obsolete or misleading, since he speaks also to that which is above time. All can share in some rough way in the artist's work; and some arts, like that of singing, clamour for the co-operation of all: yet the highest spirits can find no higher realm of expression; art is for them a realm of perfection always above their powers, outdistancing every other form of human effort. The mere logical use of words cannot express what man can know, and he leaves it behind—breaking into song, arranging his words so that they can carry a meaning which they do not naturally bear, and pass as poetry into the

world of imperishable substance. Even in the realm of ethics, the highest conduct acquires the same poetic quality, and the saint makes his whole life a work of art: we recognise instinctively the difference between the virtuous man who leads a good life and that other kind of man whom we meet perhaps once or twice in a lifetime (for he is the rarest of artists), of whom we say that his life is beautiful.

In worship, men express their emotions, describe their religion to one another, and proclaim it to the world, not only and not best by the logic of words, but also by art, giving to words the higher value of poetry or exalted prose, depicting their faith and creating an environment by the static arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Poetry and music, the two arts which are universally used in all worship that is not entirely silent, are not static but arts of movement; and there is another art of movement—ceremonial, which is almost as universal: indeed every historical religion in the world has used it freely; and the reduction of it to a minimum in the Protestant Churches is so manifestly a mere reaction from the Catholic tradition that we might almost ignore it, were it not a reaction of a very valuable character which contributes a corrective element that modern religion cannot afford to forego.

Ceremonial is more subject than the other arts to deterioration, both in beauty and meaning; and because it has since the time of Constantine fallen increasingly under legalism (besides being closely bound up with our deep-rooted conservatism) it is very difficult to reform. Therefore in the interest of ceremonial itself a clearance is sometimes necessary, a sharp break with habits and rules, a return to extreme simplicity. Elaboration is the enemy of good ceremonial. All religions in the first flush of their enthusiasm and strength are simple in their ceremonies; as they settle down, their ceremonial, like their theology, develops, and gradually becomes excessive. Happy is the religion that can then throw off the burden and start again. Such a new start was made by Jesus Christ; and surely one was long overdue at the Reformation.

What then is ceremonial? It may be defined I think as action in worship, and includes dancing, although, rightly or wrongly, formal dancing has no place in Christian worship, with the solitary exception of the minuet in Seville cathedral. It is important to remember that the exclusion of the dance is, however, a peculiarity of the later Jewish and the Christian religions, and was originally due to the reaction against pagan licentiousness: the drama was excluded for the same reason, but

after about a thousand years the drama came back, and was revived in the church itself and as part of the services. By this time the government of the Church was in the hands of celibates, to whom the dance was a constant source of danger, and the influence of monastic puritanism was also strong; dancing became thus traditionally a secular amusement, and many have tried to abolish it even in its secular form. Occasionally dancing has broken out in connection with religious revivals, but (as I imagine) of a rather wild and disordered type. No one can realise how solemn, indeed how grim dancing can be, and how completely removed from the idea of sex, unless they have witnessed its practice in other religions, as, for instance, the grim dance of the Buddhist priests at Nikko, or of the priestesses at the same place, who perform on the stage of a small temple a dance which is really a sort of intercessory prayer for the visitor, who gives them a few *sen* for their service.

The whole question of the dance may seem to have a merely academic interest for Christians; but I am not sure. The impulse to dance as an act of joy and praise is a very natural one, and David's emotion in dancing before the ark was perhaps more truly religious than the fears of those who refused to perpetuate his example.

It may be that the exclusion of this deep-rooted form of human expression is one of the reasons why the Churches are out of touch with the people: already dancing is a common form of church activity in the parish-room; perhaps it will spread to the church, and the principle to which Seville bears witness will be extended. I think it will, if the churches find that it helps them in their work. It is mainly a matter of intention and of method; and I for one should like to see it tried by the right people: I can imagine, for instance, a considerable extension of the celebration of God's work in Nature by this means. The Church has not done much for this aspect of worship, an aspect which would have a very deep appeal: the *Benedicite* and a few hymns are not enough; and I can imagine a Spring festival, with a company of children dancing to one of the classical pieces of Spring music before the chancel-screen—a real offering of harmonious action, accompanied by appropriate hymns, lesson, and prayers. I think the people would be really touched and edified; and if this were so, the custom would spread. "The singers go before, the minstrels follow after: in the midst are the damsels playing with the timbrels"—That was a religious dance.

Such a spirit would help to remove that sense

of dour conventionality which we have managed to fix upon our churches since the Roundhead Commonwealth began, and which is I believe the main reason why people stay outside: the average working-man is as successfully inhibited against entering a church as against entering a private mansion, or a fever hospital. It is an odd result. We can hardly imagine the time when the church was the home of the people, where they could meet freely for discussion or friendly conversation, and the churchyard a place where the merry-making of church-ales was held under the auspices of the clergy and churchwardens. We should be startled if someone put to-day on the gallery of a church such an inscription as this at Sygate, Norfolk: "God speed the plough: and give us good ale enow. . . . Be merry and glade: with good ale was this work made." Something has gone, which in some different form we have to replace.

The State has been wiser, and has maintained the solemn dance in its ceremonial, especially in its military evolutions, which exercise a tremendous power over the public imagination. No one can have witnessed that solemn national function which symbolises the soldiers' watch over the Empire, and is called "changing guard at Buckingham Palace," without realising its

beauty as a work of art and its power over the crowds who watch it. Set to the music of fife and drum, brilliant in vestments of scarlet, black, white, and gold, at once intricate and simple in its finished movement and gesture, it is a slow war dance, or rather a dance of watch and ward over our island and our civilisation. And it sets one wondering whether the Church has forgotten something, and why music and flags and vestments in our streets and open spaces are confined to the Army—and the Salvation Army.

But, be it as it may with that ancient form of worship, the ritual dance, the arts of movement have flourished in the Christian Church as ceremonial. We British are so used to our own reactionary habits that it is difficult for us to see at first that action in worship is man's natural response to the activity of God, and that static —we might almost say sedentary—services are a highly sophisticated method of worship. They are indeed the most intellectual method; they are not only a necessary corrective to the mere ritualism of the clericalist, but also to the mere emotionalism of the revivalist, whose whole idea of religion is conversion and who generally does not know what to do with his converts when he has got them: as education spreads, there is perhaps increasing room for the static service,

especially when good music is used. But we must not be surprised if it leaves the great mass of mankind outside—if in fact it fails to evangelise the world, and loses ground which had long ago been won by the other method. God is known to men as activity, and man's natural response to God is in the action of worship and the action of good works; the most normal human types, including many—perhaps most—of the wisest and best, can respond best to God by using both forms of action.

As a matter of fact, the tendency to static worship began long before the Reformation; for more than a thousand years the principle of co-operative action had been gradually weakening, till the normal worship left the congregation as mere spectators of a ceremony performed by the ministers. The tendency persisted through the Reformation period, on both sides—the congregation assisted in a duet between priest and server at low Mass, or in a duet between parson and clerk at Morning Prayer. Even the procession is now generally restricted to the ministers and choir, while the people are left to aspire from their pews; and it has been left to the Salvation Army to show us again what a procession really is—the jubilant movement of the whole congregation, in fact the ritual dance in its untechnical form.

For worship is action—worship, that is, in its stricter sense of praise and admiration. Static services give ample though not complete scope for prayer in its great receptive aspect, but prayer is not only receptive; and praise is psychologically impossible for men without some element of active participation—that is why even in the most lifeless service the people stand up and pretend to sing now and then. We have only to study a child expressing his love by embraces, his admiration by shouting, dancing, and clapping his hands; but in our cold conventionality even applause is considered a shocking interruption of a respectable service. Now, if we are not allowed even to applaud the sentiments of the preacher, how shall we ever be in a mood to applaud the adorable Being whom we are gathered to worship? Worship is applause, in its highest form. If we consider that this would make our services rowdy, let us at least give up the pretence that they bear any resemblance to those of the Primitive Church: S. Paul had no devil of conventionality to fight against, he had only to modify excessive rowdiness by importing a little order.

The intellectual, psychic, and æsthetic elements are then all necessary, and all work in together. A serious dereliction in one department alone

would be sufficient to account for the unsuccess of the Churches, which have not been able to preserve the ground that was won for Christ during the first dozen centuries of our era; but there has been dereliction of many kinds, and theological and ethical weakness behind it all—not only in the form of Christianity which we happen most to dislike, but in our own as well. Theology will not settle down for long years to come; but in ethics and in art we can all reform, together, at once, and without contention. Cogitative words at best can only represent a part, art can suggest the whole; terms and phrases are a broken instrument for many while theology is unsettled, but art can show them the Kingdom of Heaven. And the highest of all arts is the most universal —the art of living: in ethics we find no obstacles outside ourselves; we can all read the Gospels, and imitate the Life that we find there.

Conclusion

The world has a case against the Church, and the chief sections of the Church have each a case against one another; but the whole Church would agree, and all that is best in the world of non-churchgoers would be with her in agreement, that the Founder of the Church gave men the

right ideal, and that if all were true to his teaching, divisions would be bridged and errors amended. We have therefore in this little book tried to consider again the example and teaching of Christ, in the clearer light which our knowledge of the original documents now gives us. We found there some justification for the claim of those outside the Churches that they can be Christians without adopting any formal system of prayer; for it would appear that our Lord laid far more stress on service and far less on services than is generally supposed. He does not seem to have taught that it is a sin not to pray, but that it is a loss; and his main idea of prayer was a receptive and co-operative communion with the heavenly Father. We did not find in him those common ideas about prayer which make men sceptical as to its reality; but we found some justification for those who say that a good life is the best prayer of all. Many good men stand apart from formal prayer to-day, but if they are engaged in some form or other of spiritual activity, there may be little loss, because they are receiving and because they are co-operating. It does not seem that our Lord would have blamed them, though he would have led them farther on; he seems to have found the real source of religious weakness in the Church itself of

his day. Our duty therefore in these critical times must be to examine and confess our own shortcomings, believing that if we could remove the bushel from off the light, all men would be drawn to it.

To compile a manual for the devotional life, or to attempt the explanation of that profound region which the mystics explore, was beyond the scope of this book; and we have kept within the limits defined by its title. We have attempted a cursory examination of Christian worship in its early stages, and in the improvements, deteriorations, reactions of its history, and we have tried to appreciate the three very different standpoints from which it is now regarded in Christendom. Surely a good-natured and even a charitable method has become possible to us now; for the philosophy and theology of everyone has been changed and enlarged; scientific history and the discovery of fresh evidence have brought a truer estimate of the records, from the New Testament onwards; and the new science of æsthetics is beginning to solve many difficulties. Above all, our great developments in psychology have opened many ways to mutual understanding: we can see purpose in what once appeared to be unreason, and we can be patient with what we once thought sheer

blindness; we can appreciate the power of symbolic association and reminiscence and at the same time understand the demand for simplicity or for change. Room must be found for very different temperaments in men of traditions that are wide apart; and if the Christian religion could be fully expressed in one form, it would not be the religion for the world, nor would it be the truth. The traditional services need not be weakened and cannot be abolished, yet complete liberty is also required: we have to ask the conservative to find room for reform, and the liberal to avoid the spirit of destruction. We need them both; we need indeed many aspects of truth to be combined in the same men: the ideal parish church in the coming age will surely be a place in which there are meetings of the freest type, where those who are almost outside can unite with those within, as I have suggested in Chapter XI; fresh devotional services, such as have been printed by the Student Movement and the Oxford Press in the *Book of Prayers for Students* and the *Grey Book*, for those who desire them; the conventional Morning and Evening service and sermon for those who like the old-fashioned ways, which at their best are very good; and the Eucharist for all. I say, the Eucharist for all because this is the ideal, though

it is, I fear, a distant ideal. The Eucharist was in the first ages the main Christian service, and the bond of unity; we in our unchristian way have made it the symbol of division: here if anywhere we have to be charitable and wise; and it should not be beyond the wit of man to make the Lord's Supper such an act of worship as shall include all that is dear at once to the Catholic, the Evangelical, and the Free Churchman, and ultimately to bring in those great multitudes who, not through their own fault but through the sins of our fathers, stand aloof to-day. For men are naturally sacramental, but they must be free.

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